# ASSAM DISTRICT GAZETTEERS.

VOLUME VI.

# NOWGONG.

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# PREFACE.

The Gazetteer of Nowgong lacks what is generally associated with works of this nature, *i.e.*, a directory. There is, however, only one town in the district, and that town has been described at length. The great bulk of the population live on tea gardens or in villages, which do not lend themselves to a detailed discription, and a directory of these villages would be entirely out of place. Lists of all the tea gardens and of all villages that are centres of trade have, however, been appended to the volume, and reference has been made in the text to all villages which are noted for any special industry. It is hardly necessary to add that whenever the Province is referred to, it is to the old Province of Assam as constituted in 1904 that reference is made. My acknowledgments are due to the Deputy Commissioner, Major Halliday, for his kindness in examining the work in proof.

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B. C. ALLEN.

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## CHAPTER I.

# PHYSICAL ASPECTS.

Area and boundaries—General appearance—Mountain system—River system—Marshes—Geology—Climate—Fauna.

**Area and boundaries.** The district of Nowgong is situated on the south bank of the Brahmaputra in the Assam Valley and derives its name from its principal town (Noa-gao the new village). It covers an area of 3,843 square miles, and lies between 25°,36′ and 26°,42′ N. and 91,°57′ and 93°, 45′ E. On the north it is bounded by the Brahmaputra; on the east by Sibsagar; on the south by the Naga, North Cachar, and Jaintia Hills; and on the west by the Khasi and Jaintia Hills and Kamrup.

**General appearance** The greater part of the district is a level plain, intersected with numerous rivers and water courses, and dotted over with *bils* and marshes. In places this plain is fairly densely peopled, and the banks of the Kalang are lined with villages; but near the Brahmaputra the country is liable to inundation in the rainy season, and there are wide stretches of waste land covered with reeds and grass. On the north-east, the Mikir Hills impinge upon the plain, and a considerable tract of hilly country is included in the boundaries of the district. On the south-east, there is the broad but sparsely peopled valley of the Kapili, the valley of it's

tributary the Langpher which makes its way between the Mikir Hills and the hills of North Cachar, and the upper valley of the Dhansiri, which is bounded on either side by hills. On the west, the outlying spurs of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills project into the plain. Nowgong might thus be roughly described as a tract of level country bounded on the north by the Brahmaputra, and surrounded on the three remaining sides by hills.

Across the centre of this plain stretches a belt of cultivated land from Silghat on the north-east to Jagi in the south-west; but on either side of this belt cultivation falls off, and there are wide expanses of grass land on the north and west, and of forest and hill on the south and east. The general appearance of the district is extremely picturesque. On a clear day in winter the view to the north is bounded by the blue ranges of the outer Himalayas, behind which snowy peaks glisten brightly in the sun; while to the south and east lie range upon range of lower hills whose sides are clothed with the luxuriant vegetation of a tropical forest. The level rice fields, after the crop has been carried and stubble alone remains, might perhaps seem tame and uninteresting, were it not for the groves of slender palms and feathery bamboos with which they are broken up. During the rains this portion of the district is covered with a rich green carpet which gradually turns to gold, and on every side are swamps and rivers, hills and woods, to lend variety to the scene.

The Chapari

The mauzas fringing the Brahmaputra are deeply flooded in the rains and are for the most part covered with reeds, such as khagari (*saccharum spontaneum*), ikra (*saccharum arundinaceum*), and nal (*phragmites roxburghii*) which are from ten to twenty feet in height. The greater part of this tract lies too low for the growth of any trees except the simul (*bombax malabaricum*) which is dotted here and there over the surface of the plain. Nepali graziers keep large herds of buffaloes on the *churs* or sandbanks which are continually being formed by the Brahmaputra, and in the cold weather the villagers cut and burn the jungle, and sow mustard or summer rice in fields surrounded with a wall of reeds. These fields are described by the people as their *pams*. Their regular homes are often situated many miles away, near the land on which they grow transplanted rice; but at the commencement of the cold weather they move down to the *chapari* and live in little huts of grass during the time that ploughing and sowing is going on. Sometimes they return home while the crop is growing, and only revisit the *pam* to cut and thresh the harvest; sometimes they remain on during the whole cold weather. The mustard fields are dotted about, bright patches of vivid yellow in the dense green jungle, and come as a pleasant change to the inspecting officer who has generally reached them through footpaths, which are almost tunnels, shut in on either side by an impenetrable wall of grass and reeds. There is a pleasant feeling of freshness on these riparian flats on a foggy winter's morning. The soil is light and

springy, the partridges are to be heard calling in the jungle, the mustard when in flower has a strong but pleasant smell, and there is a general sense of freedom and an absence of restraint.

**The southern mauzas.** South of the Kapili, between Dharamtul and the hills, much of the country is again below flood level, and is covered with high grass jungle interspersed with *dolonis*, or marshes covered with the most luxuriant fodder grass, in which the cattle graze knee deep in the cold weather. The valley of the Kapili beyond Jamunamukh is very sparsely peopled. Part of this tract is marshy, part is rolling savannah, which supports a stunted growth of thatching grass and is almost destitute of trees. Further east, the valley of the Langpher is covered with dense tree forest. This forest covers the whole of the upper valley of the Dhansiri between the Mikir and the Naga Hills, and, prior to the construction of the Assam Bengal Railway, acted as a most complete and effectual barrier to all intercourse between the southern corners of Sibsagar and Nowgong. For fully ninety miles the railway runs through a pathless wilderness of trees, a desolate and malarious tract shut in by hills on either side; but east of Dimapur this dismal forest is included in the district of Sibsagar, and thus only a portion, though perhaps the larger portion, falls within the boundaries of Nowgong.

**Mountain system.** The two main mountain systems of the district are the Mikir Hills on the north and east; and, on the south and west, the outlying spurs which project from the Assam Range into the Brahmaputra Valley. The

Mikir Hills cover an area about 60 miles in length and 35 in breadth, but the greater portion of this tract lies in the neighbouring district of Sibsagar. Their western spurs from Kuthari to Dabaka are situated in Nowgong, and the hills that lie south of the Mohandiju and Jamuna rivers also fall within the boundaries of the district. They rise steeply from the narrow valleys with which they are intersected, and hill and valley alike are covered with dense tree forest, except in places where they have been cleared for the shifting cultivation of the Mikir tribe. The tops of the ranges in Nowgong average from one to two thousand feet in height, but Bar Kandali, the highest peak in the district, is nearly 3,000 feet above the level of the sea. These hills support a scanty population who grow dry rice, vegetables, and cotton on their slopes, and are seldom visited by the natives of the plains. The outlying spurs of the Assam Range are somewhat lower, and the highest peak is Lusuri in Duar Amla mauza (2,400 feet). In appearance and general characteristics they do not differ materially from the Mikir Hills.

Apart from the two main systems there are numerous isolated hills dotted over the surface of the plain. Near Silghat there are two, one called Kamakhya and the other Hathimur, which overhang the Brahmaputra. On Kamakhya, whose summit is 800 feet above the sea, there is a temple sacred to Durga, where sacrifices are still offered to the goddess. A similar shrine on Hathimur is now neglected and has fallen into disrepair. Jamunamukh and Garubat are two mauzas

lying near the junction of the Kapili and the Jamuna, between the Mikir and the Khasi Hills, and here, as is only natural, a few outlying hills are found. One of these, named Madhpur, is a site for local worship, while on another, called Modartali, are the remains of a temple erected in honour of the goddess Kamala. Further west the level of the Kapili valley is unbroken, but in the Raha tahsil there are a few low hills, on one of which, Bashundori, there is an image of the goddess of that name and two of Gonesh The south of Gobha is entirely hilly country, and on one of the peaks, called Deosal, there is a temple sacred to Mahadeo. Even in Tetelia mauza, north of the Kalang, there is a hill nearly 1,000 feet in height, and in Mayang, which is bounded on one side by the Brahmaputra, are two hills, Boha and Mayang, sacred to Gonesh. East of Ghugua, the country is a broad alluvial plain whose even surface is unbroken by the smallest elevation till the hills at Silghat rise above the horizon.

**River system: the Brahmaputra.**

The principal river of Nowgong is the Brahmaputra, which flows along the whole of the northern boundary, and it is into the Brahmaputra that all the drainage of the district ultimately finds its way.

In this portion of it's course the Brahmaputra displays in a pronounced degree the special characteristics by which it is distinguished in Assam. It oscillates from side to side of the sandy strath or valley through which it makes its way, and seldom follows the same course for many years. Its waters are surcharged with matter in suspension, and a snag or other slight obstruction in

the channel is liable to give rise to an almond shaped sandbank. The next flood may wash this bank away, or it may only serve to increase its size, and in a surprisingly short space of time a considerable island is formed covered with reeds and grass. Numerous backwaters and minor channels take off from the main stream, only to rejoin it a few miles lower down, and it is not merely one great drainage channel, but a regular system of streams surrounding and depending on the parent river. These streams enclose great *churs* and islands covered with elephant grass and reeds, and in the cold weather there is generally a foreshore of hot and glaring sand. In the rains these channels are full of water, and in places the river is several miles across. Even this great expanse is not enough to contain it's waters, and in times of flood the river spreads over the low land at the side. At Silghat and Tezpur there are rocks and hills to give permanence to the channel, and west of Tezpur and near Bishnath the high bank comes right down to the water's edge, but, as a rule, the Brahmaputra is fringed with swamps and marshes, covered with high grass and reeds.

**Other rivers The Kalang.**

Duar Bagari and the eastern portion of Duar Salana, in the north-east corner of the district, are drained by the Diphlu, the Gatonga, and its tributary the Deopani. About eight miles north-east of Silghat the Kalang takes off from the Brahmaputra, and after flowing a tortuous course through the centre of the district past Nowgong, Raha, and Jagi, rejoins that river at Kajalimukh about 15 miles above Gauhati. The Kalang receives the drainage of the north western slopes of the Mikir Hills

in the Misa and Diju which join it in the upper portion of its course. Further south, the drainage of these hills is collected in the Nanai or Hari, which flows for some distance parallel to the Kalang and finally falls into it at Raha. Here, too, it is connected by a channel with the Kapili, which brings to it the drainage of North Cachar and the eastern slopes of the Jaintia Hills; but the main stream of that river turns to the west, and, after receiving the Barpani and the Umiam or Kiling from the Jaintia and Khasi Hills, falls into the Kalang at Jagi. A little to the west of Jagi, the Kalang forms the boundary between the districts of Kamrup and Nowgong, and not far from its junction with the parent stream receives the Digru on its left bank. The total length of the Kalang is 73 miles, and, by acting as a receiver for the Brahmaputra, it fills a most important place in the drainage system of the district. The current is somewhat sluggish, the bed of the river soft and muddy, and the banks are steep and high. Between Samagurihat and Raha they are covered with a continuous line of villages, and between Raha and Jagi the river flows as a rule between villages or rice fields, but from Jagi to its' mouth it passes through waste and jungle land. During the rains it is navigable throughout its length by a boat of four tons burthen, and small steamers go down it from Silghat as far as Nowgong station. In the dry season the flow of water from the Brahmaputra is stopped by a sand-bank which has formed near Silghat, and above Jagi the river can be crossed on foot, and is thus little used for navigation. During the rains ferries are maintained

at Jagi, Raha, Nowgong and Kuwarital, but at the last three places temporary bridges are erected when the water falls. The country between the Kalang and the Brahmaputra is drained by a large number of *jans* or water courses flowing a tortuous and sluggish course between high banks parallel to the main river. They form a network of intricate channels which here and there widen out into *bils* or swamps, the largest of which are known as the Leteri and Sonai.

The Kapili rises in the Jaintia Hills and enters the Nowgong district at Panimur. From here it flows a north north-westerly course till a little below its confluence with the Jamuna, where it takes a turn to the west and flows past Raha. Here it is connected by a branch channel with the Kalang, but it is not till Jagi is reached that it finally falls into that stream after a course of 163 miles. The principal tributaries of the Kapili on the right bank are the Doiang which joins it at Panimur, the Lankajan, and the Jamuna which is swelled by the following streams, the Dimoru, the Dighalpani, the Horgati and the Buriganga. On the left bank the Kapili receives the Kolanga, the Barpani, and the Umiam or Kiling, the two latter being themselves considerable rivers. Just below its junction with the Umiam it is crossed by the railway on a brick bridge no less than 500 yards in length, but this bridge is much in excess of the width of the river, when flowing between its permanent banks. During the rains it is navigable by a boat of four tons burden as far as Panimur, but a vessel of this size could not get much above Kampur in the dry The Kapili.

season. The river is largely used as a trade route, and affords an outlet to mustard grown in the plains, and to cotton, lac, cocoons, and timber from the hills.

**Marshes.**

Nowgong is dotted all over with *bils* and marshes, many of which have formed in the beds of rivers which have changed their courses. Altogether there are some 57 *bils* or marshes which are sold as public fisheries, and more than one hundred which are used by the villagers for this purpose but are allowed to remain untaxed. These marshes are especially numerous in the *chapari* or low land near the Brahmaputra, but none are of conspicuous size or importance. The largest are, perhaps, the Mora Kalang and the Kachudhara, which have formed in the old bed of the Kalang, the Lalung *bil* in the Namati mauza, the Goukhajua *bil* in Mikirbheta mauza, the Garanga and Pakaria in Mayang mauza, the Udari Khanagaria in Ghugua mauza, and the Haribhanga *bil* near Laokhoa opposite Tezpur. During the cold weather these *bils* are very pleasant places. The water lies in the centre of the depression and is surrounded by a belt of the most luxurious fodder grass, which is again enclosed by a wall of reeds, some ten or twelve feet high. These marshes generally teem with fish, and are the haunt of birds of every kind ranging in size from the crane, pelican, or fish eagle to the snippet and the small blue kingfisher. In the wilder parts of the district the sportsman on breaking through the encirling wall of jungle, may come upon a wild pig rooting for his food, or a herd of buffalo standing knee deep in the rich pasture or wallowing in

the shallow water near the edge; while sometimes, if the fates are unusually kind, he may find, as the sun is setting, a large rhinoceros taking his evening drink.

*Bils* that have formed in the beds of rivers that have changed their courses are of a different character. The banks are high, and are often overgrown with trees, and the *bil* is long and narrow and often fairly deep.

Geology.

The soil of the plain is of alluvial origin and consists of a mixture of clay and sand in varying proportions, ranging from pure sand on the banks of the Brahmaputra to a stiff clay which is quite unfit for cultivation. Little is known about the southern slopes of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, but they are said to be of gneissic origin. The Mikir Hills were examined by an officer of the Geological Survey Department in the winter of 1896-97. Nearly the whole of the north Mikir Hills are composed of massive gneiss or foliated granite, but to the south there are only two exposures of this rock.* The hills west of Lumding, and between Dimapur and Mohandiju consist of finely bedded grey clay shales, which, north of Lumding, have been covered with sandstone beds. A mottled earthy trap is often found at the junction of the gneiss and the sedimentary rocks, but there is a remarkable absence of trap dykes in the gneissic area. Deposits of limestone are found at Panimur and near the Jamuna river, but are unfortunately somewhat inaccessible and have not yet been worked. Salt is found in the Mikir Hills at Jangthang and there



*The hills lying north of the Daigrung do not seem to have been included in this officer's enquiries.

are traces of petroleum in the neighbourhood of Lumding. Iron ore is also of wide spread occurrence in the southern Mikir Hills. There are great quantities of ferruginous sandstone passing locally into sandy haematite and haematitic conglomerate, but there seem to be few places where it is sufficiently concentrated to make a workable ore. Coal is found, amongst other places, on the Langlei hill and near the mouth of the Diphu river. The latter deposit gives an analysis of 40 per cent. of carbon and is the best coal found, in the Mikir Hills, but the thinness of the seam, coupled with the fact that it is under water during half the year, deprives it of any value. The Langlei seam consists of twelve feet of visible coal, but it is of very poor quality with a low percentage of fixed carbon and a high percentage of ash. It is only twelve miles as the crow flies from Lumding, but is much more inaccessible than this figure would suggest, as the intervening country is covered with dense jungle and broken up with deep watercourses and ravines. For further particulars with regard to the geology of the Mikir Hills reference should be made to Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, vol. xxviii, part 1, pages 71-95.

Climate.

The climate of Nowgong does not differ materially from that of the rest of Assam Proper. From the middle of November till the end of February the weather is all that could be desired. The total rainfall during this period is only about two inches, the sky is clear, the sun though bright has little power, and the air is cool and pleasant. Fogs sometimes hung over

the *chapari* near the Brahmaputra, but even fogs are not an unmitigated evil, as by diminishing the period during which the earth is exposed to the influence of the sun's rays, they help to keep the country cool. In March the temperature begins to rise, but the copious showers of April, when from five to six inches of rain fall, effectually prevent the development of anything in any way resembling the hot weather of Upper India. Between May and September the rainfall is fairly heavy, the air becomes surcharged with moisture, and the damp heat is trying alike to Europeans and to natives. It is seldom that the thermometer rises above 90°. Fahrenheit, but, in an excessively humid atmosphere like that of Nowgong, even such a moderate degree of heat has a relaxing effect upon the constitution. In October, the temperature begins to fall and the nights are fairly cool, but the winter does not actually set in till the middle of November. Table I shows the average monthly rainfall at certain selected stations. Over the greater portion of the plains the average fall is about 75 inches in the year, but in the Kapili valley it is considerably less, and at Lanka it is only 42 inches—a rainfall which is phenomenally low for the Province of Assam.

**Storm, floods and earthquakes.**

Nowgong is seldom visited by violent and destructive storms, though an interval of dry weather in the rainy season is often closed by a thunder shower, which is extremely welcome as it at once relieves the oppressiveness of the atmosphere. Hailstorms occasionally do damage, especially to tea gardens, but are very local

in their sphere of action. The harvest is often injured by the floods of the Kapili and the Brahmaputra, and this subject will be discussed at greater length in the section on agriculture. The district, like the rest of Assam, has always been subject to earthquakes and suffered severely in the great visitation of June 12th 1897. The circuit house, court house, and Deputy Commissioner's bungalow were rendered unfit for habitation, parts of the jail wall collapsed, and the metalled road along the side of the Kalang was split up with yawning fissures. Some damage was also done to masonry buildings in the district, but fortunately the loss of life was very small, and only three deaths were actually attributed to the earthquake.

Fauna.

Wild animals are fairly common and include elephants, rhinoceros, bison (*bos gaurus*), buffalo, tigers, leopards, bears, wild pig, and different kinds of deer of which the principal varieties are sambar (*cervus unicolor*), barasingha (*cervus duvauceli*), hog-deer (*cervus porcinus*), and barking deer (*cervulus muntjac*). Elephants are fairly common, especially near the hills, and, when the crops are ripening do much damage unless the numbers of the herds are regularly kept down. For this purpose the district is divided into 6 *mahals* or tracts. The right to hunt in each *mahal* is sold by auction, and the lessee is required to pay a royalty of Rs. 100 on every animal captured. The method usually employed is that known as *mela shikar*. Mahouts mounted on staunch and well trained elephants pursue the herd which generally takes to flight. The chase is of a most

arduous and exciting character. The great animals go crashing through the thickest jungle and over rough and treacherous ground at a surprising pace, and the hunter is liable to be torn by the beautiful but thorny cane brake, or, were he not very agile, to be swept from his seat by the boughs of an overhanging tree. After a time the younger animals begin to flag and lag behind, and it is then that the opportunity of the pursuer comes. Two hunters single out a likely beast, drive their elephants on either side, and deftly throw a noose over its neck. The two ends of the noose are firmly fastened to the *kunkis*, as the hunting elephants are called, and as they close in on either side the captured animal is unable to escape, or to do much injury to his captors, who are generally considerably larger than their victim. The wild elephant is then brought back to camp where it is tied up for a time and gradually tamed. From 80 to 100 *kunkis* are generally employed, only a small proportion of which are the property of the actual *mahaldar*. The arrangement generally made is that the *mahaldar* pays the price of the *mahal*, and that he receives from his partners one fourth of the elephants they capture. The royalty on each elephant is paid by the person who will receive the price when the animal is sold. 38 elephants were caught in 1897-98 the last year in which the *mahals* were sold by the Deputy Commissioner.

Rhinoceros live in the swamps that fringe the Brahmaputra and are now becoming very scarce. They breed slowly, and as the horn is worth more than its

weight in silver, and the flesh is prized as food, they present a tempting mark to the native hunter. Recently 40 square miles of uninhabited jungle land near Laokhoa have been reserved and constituted a sanctuary for game, and a proposal to form a similar reserve of 37 square miles near Dimaru is under consideration. Herds of wild buffalo are also found near the Brahmaputra, and wild bulls often serve the tame cows that are kept by the Nepalese on the river *churs*. Bison are generally found near the hills and in the neighbourhood of tree forest; tigers, leopards, and bears are met with in almost every part of the district. Wild animals cause little loss of human life, but, in 1903, are said to have accounted for over one thousand head of cattle. The number of human beings killed in that year by different animals was as follows—elephant 1, tigers 6, bears 2, wild buffaloes 4, wild pigs 2, snakes 9, total 24. Rewards were at the same time paid for the destruction of 27 tigers, 23 leopards, and 18 bears.

Small game include wild geese and duck, snipe, florican *(sypheotis bengalensis)*, black and marsh partridge, pheasants, jungle fowl, and hares.

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# CHAPTER II.

# HISTORY.

Summary—The Kingdom of Kamarupa—Visit of Hiuen Tsiang—Jangal Balahu—Nowgong copper plate—The Kachari kingdom—Wars between Ahoms and Kacharis—The Koch Kings—Koch and Muhammadan invasions—The Ahom Kings—The Moamaria insurrection—Annexation of Assam by the British—Ahom Government and social life—Condition of country in 1824—Changes in district boundaries—The Phulaguri riot—Archaeological remains—Chronological Table.

**Summary.**

It is doubtful whether at any period the whole of the country which is now known as the district of Nowgong was a separate polity under its own ruler, and its history has to be considered in connection with that of the various states of which from time to time it formed a a part. It was originally included in the ancient Hindu kingdom of Kamarupa, which is mentioned in the Mahabharata, and which at one time occupied North Eastern Bengal, and a great part of what is now known as the Province of Assam. About the tenth century A. D. the northern portion of the district seems to have formed part of the territories of a powerful and civilized line of Pala kings. But even at that date Kachari princes were ruling in the Kapili valley, and, though they were conquered by the Ahoms in the sixteenth century, they continued to hold this

portion of the district as feudatory chiefs, till it passed into our hands with the rest of Assam in 1826. In the middle of the sixteenth century, the northern part of Nowgong began to pass into the sphere of Ahom influence, though, for a time at any rate, it was overrun by the Koches and Muhammadans, and it was not till about 1685, A. D. that the Ahoms finally expelled the Musalmans from Kamrup, and established their rule over the five upper districts of the Assam Valley.

**The kingdom of Kamarupa, 1200 B. C.—1000 A. D.**

According to the *Yogini Tantra*, the kingdom of Kamarupa extended from the Karatoya river on the western boundaries of Rangpur to the Dikrai in the east of the Darrang district. It was divided into four portions, *i. e.*, Kamapith from the Karatoya to the Sankosh, Ratnapith from the Sankosh to the Rupahi, Suvarnapith from the Rupahi to the Bhareli, and Saumarpith from the Bhareli to the Dikrai. The earliest king of Kamarupa of whom anything in particular is recorded is Narak, who is said to have been the son of the earth by Vishnu, and who defeated and slew his predecessor Ghatak.* He established his capital at Pragjyotishpura, the modern Gauhati, and seems to have been a powerful and prosperous, though somewhat headstrong prince. He was appointed the guardian of Kamakhya, and his name still lives amongst the people as the builder of the causeway up the southern face of the hill Nilachal, on which the temple of Kamakhya

* An account of the early kings of Kamarupa will be found in the Koch Kings of Kamarupa by Mr. E. A. Gait, C.S , published in J A. . B., Vol. LXII, Part I, No. 4, 1893.

stands. His power and presumption were such that he asked Kamakhya to marry him, and the goddess consented, on the understanding that he would construct for her a temple, a road, and a tank in a single night. He was on the point of completing this task, when Kamakhya made a cock crow before the usual hour, and the place about eight miles north of Gauhati,* at which Narak in his rage killed the cock, is still known as Kukurakata (the place where the cock was killed). He was succeded by his son Bhagadatta, who is mentioned in the Mahabharata as fighting on the side of the Kauravas at the great battle of Kurukshettra, and we thus seem justified in assuming that fully a thousand years before Christ, Nowgong formed part of a powerful kingdom ruled by a line of non-Aryan princes.

**The copper plates of the eleventh century.**

Further information with regard to the rulers of Kamarupa is given in certain copper plates, which on palæographical grounds have been assigned to the eleventh century A. D.† These plates are valuable evidence as to the state of the country at the time at which they were engraved, but their account of the genealogy of the reigning king must obviously be received with some degree of caution. The dynasty of Narak is said to have been displaced by Cala Stambha, a Mleccha or foreign conqueror, whose line ended in the person of Sri Harisa, and was succeeded by another family of foreign princes, the first of whom was Pralambha and

* A hill near Silghat is also called Kukurakata for the same cause.

† For a description of these plates see J. A. S. B., Vol. LXVI. pp. 113 and 285, and Vol. LXVII, Part I, No. 1, p. 99.

the last Tyaga Singh. The dynasty of Narak was then restored in the person of Brahmapala. The invasion of the Mlecchas and their subsequent expulsion not improbably corresponds with the great irruption of the Bodos, who, according to their own traditions were at one time ruling at Gauhati and were subsequently driven eastwards to Dimapur, but the whole of this period is involved in great obscurity.

The visit of Hiuen Tsiang, 640 A. D.

In 640 A. D. Hiuen Tsiang visited Assam, and the record of his travels affords a momentary glimpse of the conditions of the country, a glimpse which is not unlike the view afforded by a flash of lightning on a dark and stormy night. The landscape, which has been shrouded in impenetrable gloom, is suddenly disclosed to view, and with equal rapidity is engulfed again in the blackest darkness; and nothing definite is known of the fortunes of Assam and its inhabitants, either immediately before or after the visit of the great Chinese traveller. The country seems to have advanced some distance on the path of civilization. The soil was deep and fertile, the towns surrounded by moats, the people fierce in appearance but upright and studious. Hinduism was the national religion, and, though Buddhism was not prohibited, its milder tenets had comparatively few followers.

Jangal Balahu

A prince whose name is still remembered in Nowgong is Jangal Balahu. His father was the famous Arimatta, the son of a queen of Pratappur who was handed over to the embraces of the Brahmaputra, and who was sent by his mother to live on the south bank of that river.

He became a powerful king, unwittingly slew his putative father, and was in his turn accidentally killed by his son Jangal.* But this is only one of several versions of the story of Arimatta, and even the date at which he lived is most uncertain, one account referring him to the eighth and another to the thirteenth century A. D. Jangal's capital was in the Sahari mauza, about two miles west of Raha, where the remains of considerable earthworks, which are said to have surrounded his palace, are to be seen even at the present day. He was engaged in constant feuds with the Kacharis, by whom he was finally defeated and killed. Several places situated on the Kalang are said to derive their names from incidents in his flight. At Raha he stopped to drink, at Jagi he appeared above the water as he was being carried down by the current, and at Kajalimukh, at the junction of the Kalang and the Brahmaputra, he died, pierced by a *kajali* bamboo.†

**The Nowgong copper plate.**

Arimatta and Jangal Balahu are but the heroes of popular tradition, and the legends that surround their names are of little historical importance. More light is thrown upon the internal conditions of Nowgong a thousand years ago, by the inscriptions on a copper plate which was dug up on the banks of the Kalang opposite Puranigudam, and which on palæographical grounds has been assigned to the latter end of the tenth

* A fuller account of Arimatta will be found in the Gazetteer of the Darrang district.

† *Vide* an interesting account of the Koch Kings of Kamarupa by Mr. E. A. Gait, c s., J. A. S. B. Vol. LXII, Part I, No. 4 of 1893.

century A. D.‡ It records the grant of a piece of land to a Brahman by a king called Balavarman, who lived in the camp of Haruppesvara near the Brahmaputra river. Little is said of the king's capital, and the author of the plate sounds a more modest note than the scribe who on the Bargaon plate recounts the glories of Ratnapala the ruler of Durjaya (probably modern Tezpur.) There are, however, no remains in Nowgong to suggest that it ever at any time contained the capital of a really powerful prince, and possibly Balavarman was only a minor Raja of no great wealth or influence. The inscription on the plate suggests, however, that Nowgong was administered by a well organised and civilized government, much in advance of anything that could be evolved by the aboriginal tribes that at present form so large a proportion of the population, though possibly not superior to the Ahom administration before it was destroyed by rebellion from within and invasion from without. Notification of the grant is issued to "the Brahmans and other castes, headed by the district revenue officials and their clerks," and the easements to which the grantee was entitled are described in full detail. The land was confirmed to him "with its houses, paddy fields, dry land, water, cattle pastures, refuse land, etc." All persons were prohibited from trespass, including "eunuchs, grand ladies, and any other person that may cause trouble on account of the fastening of elephants, the fastening of boats, the searching for thieves,* * * the realising of tenants' taxes

‡ For a full account of this plate see J. A. S. B., Vol LXVI, Part I. No 4 p. 285.

and imposts, and the providing of room for the royal umbrella." It is possible that these precise injunctions were merely borrowed from the formulae employed for grants of this description in the great kingdoms of the west, but if they had any application to the conditions actually existing at the time, it is evident that the Nowgong of the tenth century was very different from the Nowgong from which the British expelled the Burmese in 1825.

**The Kachari Kingdom.**

The plate is valuable as throwing some light upon the conditions of Nowgong, but it tells us but little of the history of the district. At the time at which it was engraved the Kacharis were in all probability an important power, at any rate in the Kapili valley, and some account must now be givien of the origin and development of the Kachari kingdom.

**Origin of Kacharis.**

The Kacharis or Bara, (mispronounced Bodo) as they call themselves, belong to the great Bodo tribe, which is found not only in the Brahamaputra Valley, but in the Garo Hills and in Hill Tipperah south of the Surma Valley. It is generally supposed that they are a section of the Indo-Chinese race, whose original habitat was somewhere between the upper waters of the Yang-tse-kiang and the Hoang-ho, and that they gradually spread in successive waves of immigration over the greater part of what is now the Province of Assam. This theory has much to recommend it though, as a matter of fact, apart from the southward movement of the Miris and Chutiyas, most of the tribal migrations of which we have actual knowledge have been from

the south towards the north. This was the direction of the Ahom invasion in the thirteenth century, the traditions of the Nagas all represent them as coming from the south, and the northward movement of the Kuki tribes was only stopped by the intervention of the British Government. On the other hand, Mr. Dundas quotes a prayer used by the Dimasa, or Kacharis of the North Cachar Hills, which supports the view that the tribe came from the north-east. It refers to a huge pepul tree growing near the confluence of the Dilao (Brahmaputra) and the Sagi. There the Kacharis were born and increased greatly in numbers, and thence they travelled by land and water till they reached Nilachal, the hill near Gauhati on which the temple of Kamakhya stands. From Gauhati they migrated to Halali and finally settled in Dimapur. It has been already suggested that the Mleccha chief who overthrew the line of Narak may have been the Kachari king, and it is not unlikely that when driven from Gauhati they should have retreated to the valley of the Dhansiri and have established their capital at Dimapur. It was possibly at this time that the race who are somewhat loosely denominated Kachari split up into two sections, and it seems doubtful whether the Kacharis who live on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, were ever in any way connected with the king of Dimapur. The one tribe style themselves Bara, the other Dimasa, and though both use languages of Bodo origin, the difference between plains Kachari and Dimasa is greater than that between French and Spanish. The two tribes sprang no doubt from the same stock, but there

is no evidence to show that the Kacharis of Darrang were ever subjects of the historical Kachari kingdom, or that they are more closely connected with the Kacharis of North Cachar than are the Rabhas and Lalungs, who are also members of the Bodo race. Even in Nowgong there is a marked distinction between the two sections of the tribe. The Kacharis of north Nowgong are Bodos, while those in the south are called Hojai Kacharis and are akin to the Dimasa.

The following legend which is prevalent amongst the Dimasa, would account for the separation of the Bodo and Dimasa, but no traces of the story have been found amongst the Kacharis of Darrang. "Long ago the Dimasa fought against a powerful tribe and were beaten in a pitched battle. They were compelled to give ground but after a time further retreat was barred by a wide and deep river. In despair the king resolved to fight again on the following day, but in the night a god appeared to him and told him that the next morning the army could cross the river if they entered it at a spot where they saw a heron standing on the bank. No one, however, was to look back while the movement was in progress. The dream proved true. A heron was seen standing on the bank and the king and a great portion of his people crossed in safety. A man then turned to see whether his son was following, when the waters suddenly rose and swept away those who were in the river bed and prevented the others from crossing. The Dimasa were those who succeeded in reaching the further bank in safety."

**Kachari remains in Kapili valley.**

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, when the Ahoms first made their appearance in the Assam Valley, the Kacharis seem to have been a powerful tribe occupying the valleys of the Dhansiri and Kapili and ruling over the western portion of Sibsagar and the southern and eastern portions of Nowgong. The remains of their capital at Dimapur * clearly show that they had advanced a considerable distance on the path of civilization. It is now buried in dense tree jungle, and the tract of land lying between the Mikir Hills and the Assam Range, which was formerly part of the Kachari kingdom, is a howling wilderness almost destitute of inhabitants, but it was apparently not so sparsely peopled some centuries ago. The upper portion of the Kapili valley is now the site of a few scattered hamlets of Mikirs and Kacharis, but the ruins of tanks, some of them of considerable size, are to be seen on every side. Even more interesting remains are to be found near the Jurijan, a little to the south of Jamunamukh, in the shape of a fort and three temples built of large blocks of stone and adorned with bas-reliefs and carvings. It must, however, be borne in mind that native rulers often constructed works of considerable size, more for self-glorification than from any idea that they would serve a useful purpose, and it would not be safe to infer that the population was actually as dense as the number and size of the drinking tanks might at first suggest. An army which was sent by Rudra Singh up the Kapili

* Dimapur is situated on the Dhansiri on the western borders of Sibsagar. An account of the ruins will be found in the Gazetteer of that district.

valley in 1706 A.D., seems to have advanced but slowly, and the path had apparently to be cleared through jungle. Five days were consumed in the journey from Jamuna fort to Tetelikhara *chauki*, a distance of six miles, and there is nothing in the Ahom chronicles to suggest that this part of the country was ever densely peopled in the sense in which that term is usually understood in India.

**Wars between Ahoms and Kacharis.**

The first collision between the Ahoms and the Kacharis occurred in 1490 A.D., when the Ahom king Suhangpha was defeated and driven across the Dikho. The fact that the battle was fought in the eastern part of the Sibsagar district, affords some indication of the power of the Kacharis at the end of the fifteenth century and the distance at which they could make their influence felt. Their successes were not, however, of long duration. War soon broke out again, and in 1536 A.D. the Ahoms advanced up the Dhansiri, killed the Kachari king Detsung, and sacked his capital at Dimapur. From this time forward the Kachari princes occupied the position of feudatory chiefs. Their capital was removed first to Maibang in the North Cachar Hills, and afterwards to Khaspur on the southern side of the Barail, and their subsequent history will be found in the Gazetteer of the Cachar district. It is, however, clear that in his tributary capacity the Kachari king held the valley of the Kapili, till it was finally annexed by the British in 1826 A.D. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, during the reign of Kamaleswar Singh, the Kacharis and Moamarias attacked

the Ahoms near Raha, and the Kapili valley even at that time was described as Kachari territory.*

The Koch kings. Viswa Singh, 1509–1534.

But, whatever may have been the fate of the Kapili valley, the northern portion of Nowgong came, for a time at any rate, under the Koch kings of Kamarupa. The founder of the Koch kingdom was a Mech named Viswa Singh, who is said to have been the son of Hira, the wife of one Haria Mandal, by Siva, who assumed the shape of her husband, and thus induced her to admit him to her embraces. Viswa Singh subdued the petty princes who surrounded him, founded a magnificent city in Kuch Bihar, and reduced his state to order. He is said to have marched against the Ahoms, but to have abandoned the expedition owing to the collapse of his commissariat; but the Ahom version, which states that he was defeated and made tributary, seems a more probable explanation of the failure of the expedition.

Nar Narayan, 1534–1584 A. D.

Viswa Singh died after a reign of 25 years, and was succeeded in 1534 A.D., by his son Malla Deva who assumed the name of Nar Narayan. The reign of this prince represents the zenith of the Koch power, and his armies, which were led by his brother Sukladwaj or Silarai, met with almost unvarying success. He first attacked the Ahoms, but, mindful of his father's failure, commenced his operations by building a great military road along the north bank of the Brahmaputra, and constructing tanks at regular intervals along it.

* The Ahom general was named Haripod Deka Phukan, and his grand children are still alive. As a reward the general was granted an estate of 8,000 *bighas* which is situated in the Mikirbheta mauza.

The work was entrusted to his brother, Gohain Kamala, and the road, much of which is still in existence, bears the name of Gohain Kamala Ali to the present day. Nar Narayan entered the Ahom capital Gargaon (the modern Nazira), and did not leave till he had received the submission of the Ahom king. The Kachari Raja and the Raja of Manipur were then reduced to the position of feudatory chiefs, and the kings of Jaintia, Tippera, and Sylhet conquered and slain. Further successes were obtained over the rulers of Khairam and Dimuria, but the tide of fortune turned when an attack was made on the kingdom of Gaur. The Koch army was routed and Silarai himself made prisoner. Nar Narayan would not, however, accept this defeat as final, and a few years later joined with the Emperor Akbar in a second attack upon the Pasha of Gaur. This enterprise was crowned with success, and Gaur was divided between the Emperor of Delhi and the Koch king. But the power of the Koches declined as rapidly as it had risen, and, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, Nowgong was harried by the wars between the Muhammadans and the Ahoms, who were supporting Bali Narayan the eastern representative of Nar Narayan's line. The story of the Koch kings is told in greater detail in the Darrang Gazetteer, but here it would be out of place as they had little connection with Nowgong, and it is now time to turn to the Ahoms who preceded the British in the sovereignty of the district.

**The Ahoms.** The Ahoms were a Shan tribe from the kingdom of Pong in the upper valley of the Irawadi, who, at the

beginning of the 13th century, crossed the Patkai and settled in the south of the territory which has since been formed into the districts of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. The country at the foot of the hills was occupied by tribes of Morans and Borahis, whom they easily subdued, and who were absorbed by inter-marriage with their conquerors. But to the west and north they were confronted by far more powerful nations. Upper Assam was ruled by the Chutiyas, a tribe of Bodo origin, who are believed to have entered the valley from the north-east, and to have conquered the Hindu Pala kings whom they found in possessionof the country. On the west there was the strong Kachari kingdom with its capital at Dimapur. In the first half of the fourteenth century the Ahoms became involved in war with the Chutiyas, but their final victory did not come till 1523 A. D., when the Chutiya king was defeated and his country annexed by Suhunmung, the "Dihingia Raja," who reigned from 1497-1539 A. D. The defeat of the Kacharis and the sack of Dimapur in 1536 has already been described in the preceding paragraphs.

**Koch and Muhammadan invasions.**

The Ahoms were now supreme in Upper Assam, but were still exposed to danger from the Koch and Muhammadan powers in the west. In 1532, they defeated with great slaughter a Muhammadan invader named Turbuk on the banks of the Bhareli river, but a few years later they were conquered by the Koch king, Nar Narayan, who occupied their capital Gargaon, the modern Nazira, and exacted tribute from the Ahom prince.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, they were again involved in war with the Muhammadans, as their king Pratap Singh declined to surrender Bali Narayan, the Koch prince, who had fled to him for protection, and who sagaciously pointed out that in their own interests it was most desirable that they should maintain a buffer state between themselves and the Muhammadans. Most of the fighting took place in Lower Assam, but in 1615 A. D., a Musalman army under Satrajit advanced as far as the Bhareli, to avenge a Muhammadan trader, who had been put to death by the Ahom king. The Muhammadans, though at first successful, were subsequently defeated both on land and water with great slaughter.

The war then dragged on in Lower Assam, but in 1637 A. D., on the death of Bali Narayan, the Bar Nadi, which at present forms the western boundary of Darrang, was fixed as the frontier between Muhammadan and Ahom territory. In 1658, the Ahoms took advantage of the confusion that ensued on the deposition of Shah Jehan to extend their arms to the Sankosh, but three years later they were driven back by Mir Jumla, the Nawab of Dacca, who occupied Gargoan, and there concluded a treaty with the Ahom Raja Sutumla, otherwise known as Jaiyadwaj Singh. The stars in their courses fought, however, on the Ahom side. The rains set in with a severity exceptional even in that rainy land, the country was converted into a swamp, and disease made havoc of the Muhammadans crowded together in their water-logged camp.

An interesting account of this invasion has been given by the Muhammadan historians.* The Assamese occupied a strong fort at Kajali, which was situated near the western mouth of the river Kalang, but on the approach of the enemy, evacuated it without striking a blow in its defence. Another fort was situated at Simlagarh which seems to have been quite close to Kaliabar.† The place is described as very strong and high, and the inhabitants are said to have been as numerous as ants. Two sides of the fort had battlemented walls, and guns were placed without a break along them. In front there was a moat, and pits had been dug and filled with the *panjis* or bamboo spikes which are still so generally used in Assam at the present day. In spite of its strength the fort was taken without much difficulty by the Muhammadans and the garrison fled. A great naval battle then took place in the neighbourhood of Silghat. The Assamese are said to have had seven or eight hundred ships engaged, but they were again defeated and lost half their fleet, each of the captured vessels being armed with a gun. On the conclusion of peace the Muhammadans marched back again down the valley and suffered great privations when crossing the Kajali plain, a feat which it is said had never before been, attempted by any army. The difficulties of their advance must have been immense, if the Nowgong *chapari* was covered at that time with the dense growth of reeds and

* Vide a paper by Professor Blochmann in J. A. S. B., vol. XLI, pt. I, no. I, p. 49. etc.

† The reamains of this fort are perhaps to be found in the Kechakatigarh near Misa

elephant grass that are found there at the present day, and there is nothing improbable in the statement of the Muhammadan historian, that for four days the soldiers had to subsist on water. A large number of men were lost in the retreat down the valley, and by 1667 the Ahoms had again established themselves at Gauhati. A few years later this town was retaken by the Muhammadans, but it was captured again by the Ahoms during the reign of Gadadhar Singh (1681-1695) and from that time onward Goalpara remained the frontier outpost of the Muhammadan dominions. Local tradition has it that the district was colonized by this prince who transported families from Upper Assam to Nowgong.

**Rudra Singh. 1695–1714 A. D.**

The zenith of the Ahom power was reached in the reign of his successor Rudra Singh (1695—1714). This powerful prince waged successful wars against the Kachari Raja and the king of Jaintia, and his generals brought both of these chiefs captive to the Ahom court. The Ahoms were, however, unable to impose their yoke upon the free and savage highlanders, who rose as one man and butchered the garrisons who had been left in the chain of forts across the Jaintia Hills. Rudra Singh was the first of the Ahom kings to publicly become the desciple of Hindu priests, and after his death the power of the Ahom kingdom began steadily to decline.

**Sib Singh, 1714–1744, A. D.**

His son Sib Singh was a weak prince, much under the influence of his wives, whose name has come down to posterity as excavator of the great tank near which the present station of Sibsagar (Sib's tank) stands.

**Pramatta Singh, 1744–1751. Rajeswar Singh, 1751–1769.**

The reign of his successor Pramatta Singh was uneventful, and, during the incumbency of the next prince Rajeswar Singh, the signs of the decay of the Ahom power became all too clear. The Raja of Manipur was driven from his home and applied to the Ahom king for aid. Orders were issued for the despatch of an expedition, but the nobles, to whom the command was entrusted, excused themselves on various grounds and declined the proferred honour. The army lost its way when endeavouring to cross the Patkai, a large number of men perished, and, though ultimately the Manipur Raja succeeded in regaining his dominions, it does not appear that the assistance of the Ahoms materially contributed towards his success.

**Lakshmi Singh, 1769–1780. The Moamaria insurrection.**

Lakshmi Singh's reign was signalized by the outbreak of the Moamaria insurrection. The causes of this insurrection are not quite clear. According to the chroniclers, a certain Hathidharia Chungi with one Nahor Kachari came to offer their annual tribute of elephants to the king. The elephant which they tendered to the Borborua was a lean and sorry animal, and, as an expression of his disapproval, he cut off their hair and noses, flogged them, and drove them away. Boiling with indignation at this outrage, Nahor proceeded to the house of a Hari woman, whose daughter he espoused, and from whom he received a set of metal plates, covered with mystical incantations to confound the enemy. He then applied to the Moamaria gosain for help, which was readily afforded him, and the standard of revolt was raised. This is the account given by the Ahom

chroniclers, and it differs to some extent from the story as told by the Moamaria gosain at the present day. According to this authority, the leaders of the rebellion were two Moamarias named Nahor Khora and Ragho Neogay, who, after they had been punished for failing to deliver the elephants required, went for assistance to their gosain. The gosain himself declined to listen to their proposals, but they succeeded in winning over his son Gagini Bardekha, who gave them a weapon consecrated with the magic plates of the Kalpataru. The Kalpataru was a sacred book which Anirudha is said to have obtained from Sankar Deb, though the Ahom chroniclers contemptuously assert that it was the property of a sweeper woman.

**Success and subsequent defeat of Moamarias.**

From the very first the rebels carried all before them. The royal armies were defeated under circumstances which suggest that men and officers alike were guilty of gross incompetence and cowardice; and Lakshmi Singh was driven from his capital and captured. The insurgents then proceeded to appoint Ramakanta, the son of Nahor Khora, to be their Raja. Marauding parties harried the country on every side, and the misery of the common people was extreme. A report at last gained ground that orders had been issued for the execution of all the former officers of state, and this incited the adherents of the king to make one final effort. The signal for the attack is said to have been given by one of the wives of Lakshmi Singh. Ragho, who was one of the most influential men amongst the Moamarias, had forcibly taken her to wife, and, as he

was bending down at the *bihu* to offer his largess to a dancing boy, she cut him down with a sword. On the death of their leader, the rebel forces were surprised and scattered, and a pitiless vengeance taken that spared neither age nor sex.* The house of the Moamaria mahunt was surrounded, and almost the whole of his family was killed before his eyes, while all the officers appointed by the Moamarias were seized and beaten to death. The wives of the rebel prince were treated with savage cruelty. One of them was flogged to death, while two others had their ears and noses cut off and their eyes put out.

**Gaurinath Singh, 1780–1795. Moamarias again victorious.**

In 1780, Lakshmi Singh died, and was succeeded by his son Gaurinath, in whose reign the Moamaria insurrection broke out anew, and with increased violence. At first, the king's troops met with some measure of success, and orders were issued outlawing the rebels and authorizing any person to kill any Moamaria he might meet, regardless of time, place, sex, or age. Such orders seem to have been only too well adapted to the temper of the people, and, according to the Ahom chronicler, "the villagers thereupon massacred the Moamarias with their wives and children without mercy." The rebels in their turn were not slow to make reprisals; they plundered the country on every side, and "the burning villages appeared like a wall of fire." The ordinary operations of agriculture were suspended, no harvests could be raised, and famine killed those whom

* The Moamarias say that 790,000 members of their sect were killed, which is no doubt an oriental exaggeration.

the sword had spared. "The price of a katha of rice rose to one gold mohur, and men starved in crowds under the trees forsaking their wives and children." The highest Hindu castes are said to have eaten the flesh of cows, and dogs and jackals were devoured by the common people.

In 1786, the rebels under Bharat Singh inflicted a decisive defeat upon the royal troops, and took Rangpur, the capital, by storm. The king fled to Gauhati, and in his terror left even his wives behind him. His generals remained behind in Upper Assam and carried on the contest with varying success. Troops were despatched to their assistance from Manipur but most of them were ambushed and cut up, and the survivors had no heart to carry on the struggle. The desolation of the country is thus described by the Ahom chronicler. "The Mataks harried the temples and the idols of the gods, and put to death all the sons and daughters of our people. For a great length of time our countrymen had no home, some took shelter in Bengal, some in Burma, some in the Dafla Hills, and others in the fort of the Buragohain who was fighting with the Mataks for years and months together." Bharat Singh ruled at Rangpur for upwards of six years and coins are extant which bear his name; but in 1792 a small British force was sent to the assistance of the Ahom king under the command of Captain Welsh. Gauhati, which had been captured by a mob of Doms under a Bairagi, was re-taken, Krishna Narayan, the rebellious Raja of Mangaldai, was subdued, and in March 1794 Rangpur was re-occupied after a decisive

victory over the insurgents. Captain Welsh was then recalled, but the Ahom king was able to keep his enemies in check by the help of sepoys trained on the English system.

**Kamaleswar Singh, 1795–1809 A. D.**

A few months after the departure of Captain Welsh, Gaurinath died and was succeeded by Kamaleswar Singh. The country was still in a state of great disorder. The Daflas, not content with harrying the villages on the north bank, crossed the Brahmaputra and attacked the royal troops near Silghat, but were repulsed with considerable loss. Even Europeans were not safe, and a Mr. Raush,* a merchant of Goalpara, who had extended his business operations to Darrang, was robbed and murdered by "naked Bengalis." These freebooters then occupied North Gauhati, but when they attempted to make good their position on the south bank, they were defeated with heavy loss by the royal troops near Pandughat. The Daflas again harried the Darrang district, and even enlisted Bengali sepoys in their service, but were ultimately conquered and dispersed. Victories were also obtained over the Moamarias and the Khamtis at the eastern end of the valley.

**Final collapse of the Ahom kingdom.**

In 1809, Kamaleswar Singh was succeeeded by his brother Chandra Kanta Singh. The Bor Phukan or viceroy of Gauhati incurred the suspicion of the Buragohain or prime minister and fled to Calcutta and

* This Mr. Raush was the first European to interfere in the affairs of Assam. He sent 700 burkandazes to Gaurinath's assistance, but they were cut up to a man. A mass of masonry, the size of a small cottage, covers the remains of Mr. Raush's infant children at Goalpara.

thence to Burma. At the beginning of 1816, a Burmese army crossed the Patkai and reinstated the Bor Phukan; but shortly after their withdrawal Chandra Kanta was deposed, and Purandar Singh appointed in his stead. The banished monarch appealed to the Burmese, who, in 1818, returned with a large force and replaced him on the throne.

They soon, however, made it clear that they intended to retain their hold upon Assam, and in 1820 Chandra Kanta fled to Goalpara, and from British territory began a series of abortive attempts to recover his lost kingdom. The Burmese were guilty of gross atrocities during their occupation of the country, the villages were plundered and burnt, and the people were compelled to seek shelter in the jungle. Such was their terror of the Burmese that it is said that parents would kill a crying child if it could not easily be pacified. Women who fell into their hands were violated with every circumstance of brutality, and the misery of the unfortunate Assames was extreme. Fifty men were decapitated on the banks of the Kalang river, in revenge for the opposition offered to the Burmese army before Gauhati, and upwards of two hundred persons of both sexes and all ages were imprisoned in a grass and bamboo shed and burned alive. Fortunately for them, causes of quarrel had by this time arisen between the British and the Burmese. In 1824, war was declared by the British Government, and a force was sent up the valley of the Brahmaputra. The Burmese evacuated Gauhati without striking a blow, and such fighting as

there was took place in the districts of Sibsagar and Nowgong. Rangpur was occupied in 1825, and in the following year, by the treaty of Yandaboo, Assam was ceded to the East India Company.

**Ahom Administration. The paik system.**

The above is but a brief account of the rise and fall of the Ahoms, but their history is more intimately connected with the Sibsagar district. It now remains to consider what is known of their social institutions, and the conditions under which those subject to them passed their lives.*

The most striking feature in the economy of the Ahom state, and one which, (to judge from their conduct since they came under our rule) must have been extremely repugnant to the people, was the system of enforced compulsory labour. The lower orders were divided up into groups of three or four called *gots*, each individual being styled a *powa paik*. Over every twenty *gots* was placed an officer called *bara*, over every five *baras* a *saikia*, and over every ten *saikias* a *hazarika*. In theory one *paik* from each *got* was always employed on duty with the state, and, while so engaged, was supported by the other members. The Raja and his ministers had thus at their disposal a vast army of labourers to whom they paid no wages, and for whose maintenance they did not even have to make provision. It was this system which enabled the Ahom Rajas to construct the enormous tanks and great embankments,

* This account of the social life and manners and customs of the Ahoms is principally based on old Ahom chronicles, translations of which are to be found in the office of the Superintendent of Ethnography.

which remain to excite the envy of a generation, which has been compelled to import from other parts of India almost all the labour required for the development of the Province and its industries. Many of the works constructed were of undoubted utility, but many, on the other hand, were chiefly intended for the glorification of their designers. Few objects are more worthy of the attention of an enlightened government than the supply of wholesome drinking water to the people. But the huge reservoirs constructed by the Ahom kings, were out of all proportion to the population which could by any possibility have made use of them, while the close proximity in which these enormous tanks are placed is ample evidence that practical utility was not, the object of their construction. On the other hand, embankments which were thrown up along the sides of some of the rivers near the capital, protected land which has become unculturable since they have fallen into disrepair. Embankments of this nature were constructed along the left bank of the Brahmaputra from Silghat to Kajalimukh, along the south bank of the Rupahi, and along the west bank of the Jamuna, and must have proved of the greatest value to the villagers. The duty of providing the various articles required for the use of the king and the nobility was assigned to different groups, which were gradually beginning to assume the form of functional castes. The rapidity with which these groups abandoned their special occupations, as soon as the pressure of necessity was removed, is a clear indication of the reluctance with

which they must have undertaken the duties entrusted to them.*

War

But though the common people seem to have been compelled to supply an unnecessary amount of labour in times of peace, it was when war was declared that their sufferings were most pronounced. Certain clans of *paiks* were called out, and called out, it would seem, in numbers that were in excess of the actual requirements of the case; an error which entails the most disastrous consequences when the campaign is carried on in a country where supplies are scarce and communications difficult.

According to the Ahom chronicler, nearly 40,000 troops were despatched during the reign of Rajeswar Singh to reinstate the Manipuri Raja on the *gadi*. Their guides, however, failed them; they lost their way in the Naga Hills, and about two-thirds of the soldiers perished, the mortality being chiefly due to famine and disease. The military dispositions even of Rudra Singh, one of their greatest princes, suggest a want of due deliberation in design, and a feebleness and lack of method in execution. In his expeditions against the Kachari and Jaintia Rajas, the Ahoms lost 3,243 persons, and the practical results obtained seem to have been insignificant. The descriptions of the campaigns against the Moa-

* The system of enforced labour was no doubt unpopular, but it had much to recommend it. It taxed the people in the one commodity of which they had enough and to spare, *i e* labour. It also developed them on the industrial side, and the material comfort of the Assamese would possibly have been greater at the present day if they had not all of them been allowed to devote themselves exclusively to agriculture.

marias, given by the Ahom chroniclers, clearly show that the generals were often guilty of incompetence and cowardice, while the rank and file do not seem to have fully realized the dangers that beset a defeated army. Conditions such as these must of necessity have been disastrous to the private soldier.

Muhammadans describe Ahoms as brave soldiers.

The Muhammadan historians of the invasion of Mir Jumla give, however, a more favourable account of the Ahom military dispositions.* Their resources seem to have been considerable, and, in the course of the expedition, the Muhammadans captured 675 guns, one of which threw a ball three "mans" in weight, besides a large number of matchlocks and other field pieces. No less than 1,000 ships were taken, many of which could accommodate three or four score sailors; and in the naval engagement which took place above Silghat in March 1662 A.D., the Assamese are said to have brought seven or eight hundred ships into action. The Ahoms are described as strongly built, quarrelsome, blood-thirsty, and courageous, but at the same time merciless, mean, and treacherous. They were more than equal to the Muhammadans in a foot encounter, but were much afraid of cavalry. This *corps d'elite* did not, however, exceed some 20,000 men, and the ordinary villagers, who were pressed into the service, were ready to fling away their arms and take to flight at the slightest provocation.

Uncertainty and arbitrary character of Government.

Another factor, which cannot but have re-acted unfavourably upon the common people, was the uncertainty

* An interesting account of this invasion will be found in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Volume XLI, Part 1, pages 49—100.

of tenure, under which both the ministers and king held office. A perusal of the Ahom chronicles leaves the reader with the impression that the ministers were continually being deprived of their portfolios, and not unfrequently of life itself. Hardly less precarious was the position of the king, and in the short space of 33 years, between 1648 and 1681, no less than two monarchs were deposed, and seven came to a violent end. Good government, as we understand the term, must have been impossible under such conditions, and we may be sure that the people suffered from this constant change of rulers. Buchanan Hamilton, writing at the beginning of the nineteenth century, states that the adminstration of justice under Ahom rule was fairly liberal. Important trials were conducted in open court, the opinion of assessors was consulted, the evidence was recorded, and capital punishment was only inflicted under a written warrant from the king. It is true, no doubt, that few persons possessed the power of imposing the death sentence. But they were allowed to inflict punishments which the victim could hardly be expected to survive, and his position was not unlike that of the heretic delivered by the inquisition to the civil arm, with the request that "blood may not be shed."

**Instances of this.**

Abundant evidence is available in the Ahom chronicles to show the arbitrary way in which the royal authority was exercised. The following instances are quoted from the reign of Pratap Singh, 1611—1649 A.D. A Kataki, or envoy charged with diplomatic relations with foreign powers, asked the Muhammadan commander

on his frontier to supply him with two jars. His conduct was reported to the king, who immediately ordered him to be put to death. Another Kataki reported that he had heard from a down-country man that a Muhammadan force was advancing up the valley. The king enquired of the Kataki responsible for watching the movements of the enemy, whether this information was correct. This man declared that he was unable to obtain any confirmation of the rumour, whereupon the first Kataki was executed for presuming to meddle in matters with which he had no concern—a proceeding which seems to have been hardly calculated to ensure the supply of timely and accurate information. Three merchants then endeavoured to establish friendly relations between the Nawab of Dacca and the Ahom king. The latter prince took umbrage at such unwarrantable interference in affairs of state, and ordered the merchants to be put to death. It subsequently appeared that the facts had not been correctly represented, and the Bor Phukan and two other men responsible were promptly killed. A few years later, the king transported a large number of persons from the north to the south bank of the Brahmaputra, warning them that any one who attempted to re-visit his former home would suffer the penalty of death with all his family "even to the child in the womb." Five hundred men attempted to return as they wished, the chronicler informs us, to rear a brood of silkworms. The king had them arrested, and 300 were put to death, the remainder escaping in the darkness of the night.

Savage punishments: an official blinded for not dismounting before his official superior.

The following incident that occurred in the reign of Lakshmi Singh (1769—1780) is typical of the uncertainties of the time. One Ramnath Bhorali Borua, an officer of state, had the presumption to appear mounted in the presence of his official superior the Borborua. A complaint was promptly laid before the king, who directed that both Ramnath and his brother should be deprived of sight. The injured man was not, however, destitute of friends, and came with his complaint to the Kalita Phukan, who had his private reasons for desiring the downfall of the Borborua. The Phukan went to the king, poisoned his mind against his minister with the suggestion that a conspiracy was on foot, a suggestion which in those days must always have seemed plausible enough, and, in a short time, the heads of the haughty Borborua, his two uncles and his brother, were rolling in the dust. It is needless to multiply instances of the savage violence of the times, but the different forms of punishment in vogue call for some remark. Where life was spared, the ears, nose, and hair were cut off, the eyes put out, or the knee pans torn from the legs, the last named penalty generally proving fatal. Persons sentenced to death were hung, impaled, hewn in pieces, crushed between two wooden cylinders like sugarcane in a mill, sawn asunder, burnt alive, fried in oil, or, if the element of indignity was desired, shorn of their hands and feet and placed in holes, which were then utilized as latrines.

In the seventeenth century, it was no uncommon thing to compel conspirators to eat their own flesh, and more

than one case is quoted, in which the father was forced to eat the liver of his son, a meal that was usually his last in this world. Punishment too was not restricted to the actual offender, but his wretched wife was liable to be handed over to the embraces of a Hari. Methods such as these could hardly fail to have a terrifying effect on much more hardened criminals than the Assamese.

**Social life amongst the Ahoms**

The Ahoms, even after they became a powerful nation, seem to have adhered to a simple style of life, in which there was little of extravagance or luxury. They have left few masonry memorials of their rule; the Raja's palace is almost invariably referred to as "a planked house," and, according to Buchanan Hamilton, the king alone was allowed to erect an edifice of brick. Shoes might not be worn except by the special license of the king, bedsteads and curtains were only to be found in the houses of the rich, and all but the most important visitors to a noble's house sat on the bare ground. The account given of the Raja's palace at Gargaon by the historian of Mir Jumla's invasion is pitched in a more exalted key. Twelve thousand workmen had been engaged on its construction for a year, and the audience hall was 120 cubits long by 30 wide. "The ornaments and curiosities with which the whole woodwork of the house was filled defy all description: nowhere in the whole inhabited world would you find a house equal to it in strength, ornamentation, and pictures." The absence of all reference to these wonders in the Ahom histories suggests, however, than the Muhammadans were anxious to magnify the power and majesty of the prince they had subdued.

The native chroniclers are naturally most concerned with the wars and religious festivals, which bulked so largely in the eyes of the historians of the day, and with the rise and fall of successive families of ministers. It is only incidentally that light is thrown on the social conditions of the people. The kings seem to have indulged in frequent tours about their territories, the itinerary usually followed being Rangpur, Sonarinagar, Tengabari, Dergaon, Jaliarang, Bornagar, Bishnath, and Kaliabar. They were fond of fishing and shooting, and fully appreciated the excitement to be obtained from the hunting of wild elephants. On the occasion of coronations and royal weddings, a week was generally devoted to the festivities, which seem, however, to have consisted for the most part of prolonged feasts, accompanied by much unmelodious music. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, acrobats and jugglers were imported from Bengal, who amused their royal patrons with tricks which are still shown to the tourist on the P. & O. Kamaleswar Singh visited in state the two principal *sattras* of Auniati and Dakhinpat, and was entertained with all his retinue by the gosains. The chronicler quaintly tells us that the lunch at Dakhinpat gave greater satisfaction than the one at Auniati; but does not say whether this was due to the superior skill of the Dakhinpatia cook, or to the greater beauty of the *sattra* precincts.

**Attitude of Ahoms towards Hinduism. Savage persecution of Vaishnavism.**

The first Hindus to influence the Ahom kings were Saktists, and Pratap Singh (1611—1649) persecuted the Vaishnavites, one of whose leaders had converted his son

to Hinduism. The disciples of the gosains were seized, human ordure was placed on their foreheads, and they were degraded to the sweeper caste. To be found in the possession of religious books meant death, not only to the actual owner, but to every member of his family. Even Pratap Singh's spiritual pastors were not spared, and he denounced the new religion which, in spite of the adherence of the Raja, had not been able to save from death his own beloved son. He then assembled 700 Brahmans, ostensibly to perform a festival, and, as a punishment for their incompetency, degraded them to the status of *paiks*. These persecutions were continued by Gadadhar Singh, who, in 1692, plundered the treasure houses of the Vaishnavite gosains, and cast the idols into the water. No respect was shown even to the sacred head of the Auniati *sattra*, and he was driven from his home to Tejikhat. He fared, however, better than the gosain of Dakhinpat, who had his eyes put out and his nose cut off while many Hindu priests were put to death. A policy of extermination seems in fact to have been inaugurated, and, according to one chronicler, orders were issued for the destruction of every Hindu child regardless of sex and age. The king had large quantities of pork, beef, and fowls, cooked by men of the Dom caste, and compelled Kewats, Koches, Doms, and Haris to partake of their unholy food.

This policy of oppression was reversed during the reign of Rudra Singh, his son, who was publicly admitted as a disciple of the Auniati gosain; and, from this time forward, the influence of the priests seems to have increased.

During the Moamaria insurrection the religious orders again fell upon evil times. The rebel king confined the persons of the four principal gosains, and extorted Rs. 8,000 each from Auniati and Dakhinpat, and Rs. 4,000 each from Garamur and Kamalabari. Religion was degraded by the promulgation of an order that any person could be initated on payment of a betel nut, and the common people availed themselves in crowds of this indulgence. Subsequently in the reign of Gaurinath Singh the Moamarias attacked the Garamur *sattra*, burned it to the ground, slew a large number of the disciples and nearly killed the gosain himself. His successor, Kamaleswar Singh, (1795-1809) found himself unable to pay the sepoys whose services were indispensable for the maintenance of some sort of order in the kingdom. Following the example of other monarchs, he called upon the church to supply the funds for the support of the temporal power. Contributions were levied on all the mahunts and the demands of the soldiers were satisfied.

**Laxity of Ahom Hinduism.**

But, though converted to Hinduism, the Ahoms found the restrictions of their new religion irksome; and their gosains, with the tact which they display towards their converts of the present day, allowed their new disciples a considerable degree of latitude. Rudra Singh, though he had been publicly admitted to the church by the Auniati gosain, feasted his followers on buffaloes and pigs on the occasion of his father's funeral; while not only buffaloes but even cows found a place in the menu of his coronation banquet. At the time of the first

Moamaria insurrection, the rebel chief made overtures to Lakshmi Singh, and offered him, apparently in good faith, a pig for supper. A present such as this clearly shows that even towards the end of the eighteenth century, the Hinduism of the Ahom kings was one of the most liberal variants of that catholic creed. Before taking any decisive step, it was the practice to refer, not only to the Brahmans and Ganaks, but also to the old Ahom priests the Deodhais and Bailongs. These venerable men were required to consult the omens, by studying the way in which a dying fowl crossed its legs—a system of divination which is in vogue amongst many of the hill tribes of Assam to the present day. The restrictions of caste were evidently somewhat lax, as we hear that the Moamaria mahunt had an intrigue with a Hari woman; while at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the viceroy of Gauhati took a fisher girl for his mistress, a breach of the covenances for which, it should be added, he was deposed.

**The position of women.**

The influence of the Muhammadans in Assam Proper was so slight that the low view they professed to take of the other sex had little or no effect upon the general population. The Ahoms, like their Burmese ancestors, held their women folk in honour, and, even at the present day, the purdah and all that it implies, is almost unknown in the country inhabited by the Assamese. The Ahom princesses seem to have taken a prominent part on ceremonial occasions, and not unfrequently exercised considerable influence on affairs of state. In the middle of the seventeenth century, two of the queens

almost usurped the reins of government, and, according to the Ahom chronicler, "their words were law." When called to account by the successor of their husband, they proudly stated that they had been of great service to the king, at a time when he was ignorant of the way in which he should behave, whether when "eating, drinking, sitting, sleeping, or at council." Sib Singh (1714—1744) is said to have abdicated in favour of his queens, hoping thereby to defeat a prophecy which declared that he would be deposed; and coins have been found bearing the mames of four of these princesses. The mother of Lakshmi Singh dug a tank, and Gaurinath entrusted to his stepmother the control of the Khangia mel, and consulted with his mother about affairs of state. It was not, however, only the princesses of royal blood who concerned themselves with public matters. At the time of the Moamaria insurrection, one Luki Rani was sent against the rebels; and the victory over Turbuk in 1532 is partly ascribed to the courageous action of the widow of the Buragohain, who had been killed in a previous engagement by the Muhammadans. Desperate at the loss of her husband, she put on armour and rode into the ranks of the enemy to avenge his death. No mercy was shown her and she fell, pierced with spears; but her example emboldened the Ahoms, who at once advanced to the attack and defeated the Musalmans with great slaughter.

**Condition of Province at time of cession to the British.**

In estimating the effects of British rule, it is necessary to form a clear idea of the state of the Province at the time when it passed into our possession, and first it must

be pointed out that the British did not conquer Assam in the sense in which that word is usually employed. The native system of government had completely broken down, the valley was in the hands of cruel and barbarous foreigners, and it was not as conquerors but as protectors and avengers that the English came. They were certainly not inspired by any lust for land. For some time after the expulsion of the Burmese, the East India Company were doubtful whether they would retain their latest acquisition, and an attempt was made to administer the upper portion of the valley through a descendant of the Ahom kings,

The condition in which we found the country was lamentable in the extreme. For fully fifty years, the Province had been given over to desolation and anarchy. Life, property, honour were no longer safe, and the people in their misery had even abandoned the cultivation of the soil, on which they depended for their very livelihood. Bands of pirates used to raid up the valleys of the Dhansiri and Kakadanga, and return with their boats laden with booty, leaving ruin, death, and desolation in their wake. The hill tribes were no longer kept in order, and the Daflas descended and harried the submontane tracts, and even extended their depredations to the south of the Brahmaputra. The treatment meted out to the unfortunate villagers, can be judged from the protest made by the hillmen to Rajeswar Singh, shortly before the collapse of the Ahom Government, when they begged him "not to pull out the bones from the mouth of dogs." Buchanan Hamilton, writing in

1809 A. D., states that north of the Brahmaputra "there is no form of justice. Each power sends a force which takes as much as possible from the cultivator."

**Native testimony on this point.**

The memories of this miserable time survived long after it had passed away. In 1853, an Assamese gentleman, Srijut Ananda Ram Dhekial Phukan, wrote as follows to Mr. Moffatt Mills :—" Our countrymen hailed the day on which British supremacy was proclaimed in the Province of Assam, and entertained sanguine expectations of peace and happiness from the rule of Britain. For several years antecedent to the annexation, the Province groaned under the oppression and lawless tyranny of the Burmese, whose barbarous and inhuman policy depopulated the country, and destroyed more than one half of the population, which had already been thinned by intestine commotions and repeated civil wars. We cannot but acknowledge, with feelings of gratitude, that the expectations which the Assamese had formed of the happy and beneficial results of the Government of England, have, in a great measure, been fulfilled; and the people of Assam have now acquired a degree of confidence in the safety of their lives and property, which they never had the happiness of feeling for ages past."

Whatever errors have been committed by the British Government, and it is too much to hope that no mistakes of policy have been made during an administration of nearly eighty years, there can be no question that the introduction of a settled form of government has been of the greatest benefit to the immense mass of the people to whom it has been extended.

On passing into our hands Nowgong was first administered with Kamrup and Darrang as the Lower Assam division, but in 1833, it was formed into a separate district. The head-quarters were established at Puranigudam, but it was found that there was not enough high land there for a civil station, and in 1835 they were transferred to Rangagara. This place proved to be unhealthy and was not sufficiently central, and in 1839 the Magistrate's Court was moved to Nowgong, where it has since remained. The boundaries of the district have also undergone considerable change. The Dhansiri was originally selected as the eastern frontier, and Nowgong included the country inhabited by the Mikirs and a considerable portion of the North Cachar and Naga Hills. In 1853, North Cachar was formed into a separate subdivision, and in the following year Tula Ram's* territory was added to this charge. In 1867, the Naga Hills and a large part of the Mikir Hills were erected into a separate district, the subdivision of North Cachar was abolished, and a considerable portion of the territory of which it was composed was placed under the management of the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar. In 1898, a large part of the Mikir Hills was retransferred to Nowgong and the district took its present form.

**Changes in district boundaries.**

Few events of historical interest have occurred in Nowgong during the time that it has been administered as a British district. In 1835, the revenue amounted

**Subsequent history uneventful.**

* For an account of Tula Ram and his small principality, see District Gazetteer of Cachar.

to Rs. 60,475 and the expenditure to Rs. 35,622. Ten years later the revenue had risen to Rs. 131,000, but then ensued a period of complete stagnation, and in 1853 it was less than it was in 1845. The causes of this stagnation were said to be "frequent high inundations, repeated visitations of cholera and small pox carrying off thousands, and the licentious habits of the people." The term "licentious habits" apparently refers to the use of opium, this being a drug to which the inhabitants of Nowgong have always been addicted, as the people could hardly be described as licentious in the sense in which that word is usually employed. The appalling results of *kala-azar* are described in the following chapter, but it is significant to find that the local officers even in the fifties were far from hopeful with regard to the future of the Assamese. In 1854, Major Butler wrote as follows. "In no district in Assam are the people *in more prosperous circumstances than* in Nowgong. Rice, their common food, is cheap and abundant; numerous rivers and lakes afford a plentiful supply of fish; their gardens furnish vegetables and fruit; and the climate rendering but little clothing necessary, with a trifling revenue to pay, they have every reason to be satisfied and contented; and I believe they are grateful for the protection of the British Government. With all these advantages, however, they are a licentious and degraded race and appear degenerating rapidly. Numbers of children die annually and the period of their existance seems diminishing. Few adults attain old age, and we almo st despairh ofte

population increasing or of their condition being ameliorated by education or the acquirement of more industrial habits" *

**The Phulaguri riot.**

The attachment of the aboriginal tribes to opium led to a serious riot at Phulaguri in 1861, when the cultivation of the poppy was prohibited. *Mels* or village assemblies were held day after day to discuss the new and most obnoxious orders, and were attended by large numbers of the people. The police endeavoured to disperse these meetings, and arrest the ringleaders, but found themselves powerless in the presence of such vastly superior numbers; and on December 18th Lieutenant Singer, the Assistant Commissioner, was sent from Nowgong to enquire into the matter. This unfortunate young officer called upon the villagers to disperse, and, when they failed to do so, ordered the police to deprive them of their clubs. One of the constables was assaulted as he was endeavouring to carry out this order and Lieutenant Singer, when coming to his assistance, was felled to the ground by a blow from a thick bamboo. He was deserted by the police, who incontinently fled, though the firing of a single musket was subsequently enough to make the crowd fall back, and was afterwards cruelly murdered at the instigation of one of the ringleaders who said " the saheb did not come to redress our grievances but to put us in bonds; he is still alive, kill him." The Deputy Commissioner on receiving news of the

* Travels and adventures in the Province of Assam by Major John Butler, London, Smith Elder and Company, 1855, p. 245.

murder sent out a few men from the detachment of twenty-four sepoys of the 2nd Assam Light Infantry who were stationed in Nowgong, but remained behind himself to protect the treasury. An application was despatched to Tezpur for re-inforcements, and Colonel Hopkinson, who happened to be there, ordered across fifty sepoys, and then proceeded by steamer to Gauhati to bring up eighty more, some of whom were landed at Tezpur. No further opposition was encountered and the Deputy Commissioner proceeded to Phulaguri and held a judicial investigation into the causes of the riot.

The whole occurrence seems to have been mismanaged, and to have been viewed by the local authorities with unnecessary alarm. The people had been irritated by the prohibition of poppy cultivation, and there were rumours of a tax on incomes and *pan*. Rightly or wrongly the villagers had formed the idea that they could not get a hearing from the Deputy Commissioner, and prior to Lieutenant Singer's death the mistake was made of attempting to coerce a dangerous crowd with an insufficient force. After that lamentable occurrence the authorities seem to have overestimated the gravity of the occasion, and the Commissioner describes the force of 50 sepoy marching from Laokhoa to Nowgong as protected on either flank by an impassable morass, as though they could not have easily beaten off any attack that might have been made on them by villagers armed with nothing better than bamboo clubs.

The subsequent history of Nowgong has been very uneventful, and there is no district in Assam which has been and still is so much cut off from the outside world and the hurried march of progress. The principal event of recent years has been the quiet but steady extermination of the people from *kala azar*, but this is a matter for which reference should be made to the following chapter.

**Archæological remains.**

The district possesses very few remains which are of any interest to the archæologist. The temple at Kamakhya near Silghat dates from 1745, A.D. and is built of stone and brick in the usual Ahom style. On the Jugijan, in the Kapili valley, there are the ruins of a fort and of three stone temples, two of which were of considerable size and were dedicated to Siva. These temples were built of large blocks of stone ornamented with carvings and bas-reliefs. The appearance of the ruins would suggest that they were overthrown by an earthquake, but nothing definite is known about them. Reference has been already made to the remains of Jangal Balahu's fort near Raha, and there is another rampart of a similar character near the Rangagara inspection bungalow in the Samaguri tahsil. On the Chapanalla hill in Chalchali mauza there are the remains of some stone temples and old fortifications, and there is a fine tank with brick lined sides near Jiajuri. A list of temples and of other sacred places will be found in the next chapter.

# CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

## AHOM KINGS.

| A. D. | |
|---|---|
| 1228 | Sukapha. |
| 1268 | Sutenpha |
| 1281 | Subinpha. |
| 1293 | Sukangpha. |
| 1332 | Sukampha. |
| 1364 | Sutupha-treacherously killed by Chutiyas at a regatta held on the Safrai river to celebrate a cessation of hostilities between the two tribes. |
| 1376-1380 | Interregnum. |
| 1380 | Sukemthi, a weak and tyrannical prince, assassinated by his ministers. |
| 1389-1398 | Interregnum. |
| 1398 | Sudangpha. |
| 1407 | Siyangpha. |
| 1422 | Suphukpha. |
| 1439 | Susingpha-defeats Nagas. |
| 1488 | Suhangpha-defeated by Kacharis in 1490, and murdered by a convict. |
| 1493 | Supimpha, a cruel prince assassinated by his ministers. |
| 1497 | Suhunmung, alias Sarga Narayan or Dihingia Raja. Conquers Chutiyas and annexes their kingdom 1523. Repulses two Muhammadan invasions, the second being that under Turbuk in 1532, who was routed near the Bhareli river. Kills Kachari king and sacks Dimapur his capital in 1536. Assassinated 1539. |
| 1539 | Sukhenmung-built Gargaon (Nazira). |
| 1552 | Sukampha. |
| 1611 | Suchengpha or Pratap Singh. Assists Bali Narayan against Musalmans, besieges Hajo, but is driven back. Bar Nadi accepted as frontier between Muhammadans and Ahoms in 1637. |
| 1649 | Surumpha. Deposed. |
| 1652 | Suchingpha. Deposed. |
| 1654 | Sutumla or Jaiyadwaj Singh. Ahoms occupy Goalpara, 1658. Driven back by Mir Jumla, who enters Gargaon, 1661. |
| 1663 | Chakradwaj. Ahoms reoccupy Gauhati in 1667. |

## MUHAMMADAN INVASIONS.

| A. D. | |
|---|---|
| 1204 | Baktiar Khilji invades Assam. |
| 1220 | Ghiyas-ud-din-Bahadur Shah advances to Sadiya, but is defeated. |
| 1256 | Iktiyarud-din Yuzbak Tughril Khan invades the Brahmaputra Valley but is ultimately defeated. |
| 1337 | Muhammed Shah sends a force "of 100,000 horsemen" into Assam, all of whom perish. |

## KOCH KINGS.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1509-1534 | Viswa Singh—Founds Koch kingdom, advances against Ahoms but was apparently defeated. |
| 1534-1584 | Nar Narayan-conquers Ahoms and occupies Gargaon circa 1563 A. D. Subdues Rajas of Cachar, Jaintia, Manipur, Tipperah and Sylhet, Kala Pahar invades Assam in 1553 and destroys temples at Kamakhya and Hajo. |
| 1581-1593 | Raghu Rai obtains share of Koch kingdom east of Sankosh. |
| 1593-1614 | Parikshit-builds North Gauhati, quarrels with his cousin Lakshmi Narayan, calls in Muhammadans to his aid. |
| 1614-1637 | Bali Narayan—Invokes aid of Ahoms against Muhammadans. From this date the Koch kings cease to be of any political importance. |

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.—*Concluded.*

| A. D. | AHOM KINGS. |
|---|---|
| 1670 | Adayaditya Singh, assassinated. |
| 1672 | Suklumpha-poisoned. Musalmans reoccupy Gauhati. |
| 1674 | Suhung-assassinated. |
| 1674 | Teenkungiya-assassinated. |
| 1674 | Suhungpha-blinded and murdered. |
| 1677 | Sudinpha-assassinated. |
| 1679 | Sulekpha (Lora Raja) assassinated. |
| 1681 | Gadadhar Singh—Ahoms recover possession of Gauhati. |
| 1695 | Rudra Singh—founds Rangpur, defeats Kachari and Jaintia Rajas, publicly adopts Hinduism as his religion. This period represents the height of the Ahom power. Dies at Gauhati. |
| 1714 | Sib Singh—a weak prince who resigned in favour of his wives. Excavated tank at Sibsagar. |
| 1744 | Pramatta Singh. |
| 1751 | Rajeswar Singh. Decline of Ahom power. |
| 1769 | Lakshmi Singh. Out-break of Moamaria rebellion—king deposed for a time, but subsequently reinstated. |
| 1780 | Gaurinath Singh. Driven to Gauhati by Moamarias. Reinstated by Captain Welsh in 1792, who is, however, recalled in 1794. Krishna Narayan, Darrang Raja, asserts his independence in 1792, but is defeated by Captain Welsh. |
| 1795 | Kamaleswar Singh. Deposes Krishna Narayan. |
| 1809 | Chandra Kanta Singh—Burmese are invited into Assam by Bor Phukan. Deposed 1816. |
| 1816 | Purandar Singh—Burmese again enter Assam. Deposed 1818. |
| 1818 | Chandra Kanta Singh—Burmese decline to leave-Chandra Kanta driven from Assam in 1820. |
| 1824 | War declared between British and Burmese Governments. |
| 1825 | Rangpur taken. |
| 1826 | Treaty of Yandaboo by which Assam was ceded to the East India Company. |

## CHAPTER III.

# THE PEOPLE.

Area and density—Town and villages—Variation in population—Immigration—Sex and marriage—Infirmities—Language—Caste and tribes—Religions—Occupations—Marriage customs—Amusements and festivals—The Bihus—Gosains—*Sattras*—Temples.

**Area and density.**

The district covers an area of 3,843 square miles and is extremely sparsely peopled, there being on the average only 68 persons to the square mile. There are however, marked variations from this mean and in spite of the ravages of *kala azar*, there are still considerable areas in Nowgong which support a moderately dense rural population. Mr. Mills thus describes his voyage up the Kalang in 1853.* "The villages are situated on the banks, and the scenery from the steamer was, after the immense tracts of jungle I had seen unvaried by the sight of a village, most gratifying, it was of densely populated villages with good gardens and rich culutivation. There is perhaps no part of Assam more populous and prosperous."

The banks of the Kalang between Nowgong and Kaliabar are still lined with villages, and in the Nowgong tahsil there was a density of 386 to the square mile in 1901. Hatichong and Kachamari, two mauzas which

* Report on the Province of Assam by A. J. Moffatt Mills. Calcutta, 1854.

lie west of the Kalang opposite Nowgong town, had a density of 303 over an area of 50 square miles; in the Samaguri tahsil there were 212 people to the square mile; and in the Chutial and Barbhagia mauzas immediately to the north 322. There is in fact a belt of fairly populous country on either side of the Kalang from Kaliabar to Jagi. On the other hand the mauzas which fringe the Brahmaputra are inundated in the rains and can only support a very scanty population. Juria, for instance, had a density of only 21 over 124 square miles, and Mayang and Gerua Bokani were little better. It is, however, the hills mauzas and the upper valleys of the Kapili, the Jamuna, the Dhansiri and the Langpher, which bring down the average of the district to its unusually low level, for here over a total area of 2,070 square miles there was in 1901 an average population of only 21 to the square mile.* There is of course abundance of good culturable land which is still awaiting settlement in Nowgong, but the district is not so absurdly underpeopled as the figures of density would at first suggest. There is room no doubt for an enormous increase in the population, but there are hundred of square miles included in the *chapari mahals*, the hills, and probably a considerable portion of the Kapili valley, which would never be able to support a really dense agricultural population. The density of each mauza and the decrease in population between 1891 and 1901 will be found in Table II

* The mauzas in question are:—Duars—Salana, Bamuni, Kathiatali Dikharu and Amlaparbat, and Mauzas Rangkhang Namati, Langpher, Jamunapar, Lumding Mikir, Lumding Kachari, aud Lumding Kuki.

**Town and villages.**

The district contains one town, Nowgong, which in 1901 had a population of 4 430 souls, and 1,117 villages. The villages are not, however, well defined units, clusters of huts which stand out clearly in the centre of the fields tilled by their inhabitants. Rice, the staple crop, is grown in wide plains, dotted over with clumps of bamboos and fruit trees in which are buried the houses of the cultivators. It is groves and not villages that the traveller sees when riding through the more densely populated portions of the district, and not a house can usually be discerned till he has penetrated this jungle of plantains, betel nut trees and bamboos There is generally no dearth of building sites, there are no communal lands, and there is nothing to keep the population together. It is difficult to tell where one village ends and another begins, or to which of the larger clumps of trees should be assigned the smaller clumps which are freely dotted about amongst the rice fields. The result is that the statistics of villages are of little practical importance, but taking them for what they are worth it appears that villages as a rule run small, three-fifths of the population living in hamlets containing less than 500 persons. The Mikir village, it should however be premised, is quite different from that inhabited by the ordinary Assamese. Like most of the hill tribes they build their houses in clearings near their fields, and the boundaries of the village site can be easily ascertained. They usually live in small hamlets varying in size from three or four to thirty or forty houses.

**Variation in population. Early estimates.**

The earliest estimate of the population was one framed by Mr. Robinson in 1841 who stated that the area was supposed to be 3,870 square miles and the population about 90,000 souls, an estimate which appears to have been too low. The eastern boundary was at this time the Dhansiri and in 1853, after the Naga Hills had been incorporated in Nowgong, the area was given as 8,769 square miles, and the population as 241,300 persons, exclusive of about 100,000 Angami Nagas. This estimate was probably not much beside the mark, but it was not till 1872 that a regular census was taken of the people.



**Variations since 1872.**

The statement in the margin shows the population recorded at the last four enumerations and the variation in the intercensal periods. The census of 1872 was not a synchronous one.

| | Population. | Variation + or — per cent. |
|---|---|---|
| 1872 ... | 260,238 | |
| 1881 ... | 314,893 | + 21 |
| 1891 ... | 347,307 | + 10·2 |
| 1901 ... | 261,160 | —24·8 |

It made no pretensions to scientific accuracy, and the excessive increase that occurred during the next nine years affords good grounds for supposing that it was incomplete. The Deputy Commissioner himself pointed out that too much reliance should not be placed upon the returns. The census was a novelty, its objects were not fully understood, and many of the people were afraid that it might only be the preliminary to the introduction of a poll tax. The census of 1891 was probably as accurate as these things can be, and if we assume that the population increased by 25 per cent. in the 19 years that elapsed between the two enumerations, an assumption

which would seem to err, if it errs at all, on the side of over-estimation, the population of 1872 must have been at least 277,000. Between 1881 and 1891, the district was fairly prosperous and healthy, and the natural growth* of the population amounted to nearly 11 per cent. But the seeds of disease had already taken root, and before long the effects of *kala-azar* began to make themselves apparent in the revenue returns, though the awful ravages of this disease were never fully realized till they were expressed in the census figures for 1901.

The history and character of this dreadful fever will be described in the section dealing with the medical aspects of the district, and here it is only necessary to refer to its effects upon the population. Aided by the severe epidemics of cholera and small-pox with which this sorely afflicted district has been visited, it succeeded in reducing the population to about three-fourths of that recorded in 1891. Terrible though such a reduction is, it fails to give a complete idea of the full effects of this appalling scourge. The gross population of 1901 was swelled by a large number of foreigners brought up to the railway or the tea plantations, and the caste and language tables show that the decrease in the indigenous population during the last intercensal period must have been fully 30 per cent. At the close of the nineteenth century plague and famine were at work in India, and the terrible

* Natural growth here means increase in the nnmber of those born in Nowgong and censused in the Province.

mortality they produced was blazoned abroad to the very ends of the earth. Yet not a single British district in the whole of the Indian Empire lost so large a proportion of its population as the unfortunate district of Nowgong.* The people suffered in silence, the fever killed them steadily but quietly and slowly, and the extent of the havoc wrought was never realized till the results of the census were made known.

But little could be done to mitigate their sufferings. A large number of dispensaries were opened but the treatment and the origin of the disease were alike obscure, and medical science could offer little help. In its initial stages *kala-azar* in no way differs to the casual observer from ordinary malarial fever, and it is only of recent years that the medical profession have admitted that malaria is communicable. Even now that this fact has been realized the difficulties of isolation are immense. The sick linger on for from three months to two years, and it would not be easy to segregate thousands of people for such prolonged periods even if they were willing to submit to this course of treatment. Detection and the subsequent isolation would not take place until the disease had taken a firm hold upon its victim, and had already had ample opportunity of infecting the friends and neighbours.

*Kala-azar* passed on, leaving behind it a trail of deserted villages and untilled fields, with the jungle creep-

* Bombay and the Central Provinces had the greatest losses. The worst British district in Bombay was Kaira with a loss of 17·8 per cent. the worst British district in the Central Provinces was Saugor with a loss of 20·4.

ing year by year over the kindly works of men. Between 1893 and 1900, the land revenue demand for ordinary cultivation declined by 23 per cent. and the population sank to some fifteen or sixteen thousand less than the probable numbers nearly 30 years before. With such a melancholy record before our eyes it is satisfactory to know that the disease at last is dying out and that the pepole are again beginning to increase in numbers. The epidemic was most virulent in the Raha tahsil which lost 42 per cent. of its population. The part of the district which escaped most lightly was the north-east corner where many of the tea gardens are situated.

**Immigration** The tea industry is not nearly so important in Nowgong, as in the Surma Valley or in Upper Assam, and the proportion of foreigners, (11 per cent.) is comparatively small. The total number of persons born outside the Province in 1901 was 29,629, more than a third of whom came from the division of Chota Nagpur. Details for the other Provinces of origin are shown in Table IV. Most of these foreigners were working as coolies either on tea gardens or on the railway. Immigrants other than coolies are represented by the Marwari merchants of Rajputana, artizans from the Punjab, a few Kabuli traders from Afghanistan, and Nepalese who usually earn their living as sawyers or as herdsmen, though some have settled down to agriculture. That Nowgong loses considerably by inter-district transfers is hardly matter for surprise, as it is difficult to understand why any one should voluntarily settle in this much afflicted district while there was

every inducement to the residents to leave its fever stricken villages. Most of the immigrants came from Kamrup and Goalpara, while the emigrants went to Sibsagar and Darrang. The proportion of the latter to the former was nearly three to one in 1901.

**Sex and Marriage.**

As in most of the other districts of Assam, the men in Nowgong exceed the women in numbers, and in 1901 there were only 963 females to every 1,000 males. This disparity is entirily due to the fact that women are in a minority in the immigrant population, and amongst persons born in Nowgong and enumerated in the Province in 1901 there were 1,016 females to every 1,000 males. It is a significant fact that in the last decade there was a large increase in the female element in the population in those parts of Assam in which the mortality was unusually high, and there seem grounds for supposing that the proportion of women tends to increase when public health is bad and vitality low.

The people of Nowgong have no pedantic ideas with regard to early marriage. The statement in the margin shows the percentage of Hindu girls under 10 and between 10 and 15 who have performed the marriage ceremony, and the proportion between 15 and 20 who are still unwed. For purposes of comparison similar figures are shown for Goalpara, as in this district the idea has unfortunately gained ground, that the social status of the family can be raised by imposing the responsibilities of matrimony

Percentage of Hindu girls married and widowed.

| Age. | Nowgong. | Goalpara. |
|---|---|---|
| 0-10 | 0·2 | 4·8 |
| 10-15 | 10·5 | 62·4 |
| | Unmarried. | |
| 15-20 | 40·1 | 7·2 |

on immature girls before they are physically fitted for its functions Amongst an equal number of girls under 10 there are 24 child wives in Goalpara for every one in Nowgong, and between 10 and 15 the proportion is as 6 to 1. Two fifths of the girls between 15 and 20 in Nowgong are still unmarried, and it is satisfactory to know that the stagnation of the population during the last decade was not due to any unnatural attempt to compel small children to undertake the functions of maternity before their bodies were fitted for this great strain. Such a proceeding, it may be added, only tends to defeat its own ends, as the age statistics recorded in India show, that fertility varies inversely with the extent to which infant marriage is in use.* The attempt to pluck the unripe apple in many cases kills the parent tree, or even where this dire calamity is avoided, deprives it of the power to put forth a second crop.

The growth of the people depends to some extent on the proportion of potential mothers *i.e.* of married women between 15 and 40 in the population. In this respect Nowgong is somewhat at a disadvantage as in 1901 only 14 per cent. of the population were included in this category as compared with 15·7 per cent. in the Province as a whole and 16·9 per cent. in the Central Provinces.

**Infirmities.**

The abstract below shows out of 10,000 males the number afflicted with the four special infirmities selected for record at the census in Nowgong, in the Province of Assam, and in

| | Nowgong. | Assam. | India. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Insane | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Deafmute | 13 | 9 | 6 |
| Blind | 7 | 10 | 12 |
| Leper | 8 | 13 | 5 |

* In this connection see Report on the census of India, 1901, Vol. I, P 48.

the Indian Empire. Deafmutism is exceptionally prevalent, but from the remaining three infirmities Nowgong is comparatively free.

**Language.** Assamese is the standard language of the district and in 1901 was used by 66 per cent. of the population. Assamese is described by Mr. Grierson as the sister not the daughter of Bengali.* It comes from Bihar through northern Bengal, and not from Bengal proper. The plural and feminine gender are formed in a different way from that in use in Bengali, and there is a considerable difference in the conjugation of the verb, in the idiom, the syntax, and even in the vocabulary. The pronunciation is also different, the Bengali sh. being converted into h. by the Assamese and ch. into s. The chief aboriginal languages are Mikir which is used by 13 per cent. of the people, and Lalung which is used by 5 per cent. Lalung is a member of the Bodo family and forms a link between Bodo, or the Kachari spoken in the submontane tracts of Kamrup and Darrang, and Dimasa or the Kachari spoken in the hills of North Cachar. Mikir is a link between the Bodo and the Naga groups. Rather more than 2 per cent. of the people returned Kachari as their usual form of speech, but the exact dialect whether Bodo or Dimasa it is difficult to ascertain.

The principal foreign languages were Hindi (5 per cent), and Bengali which was returned by a little under six per cent of the population. Bengali, however, means little more than "foreign language," "Bengali" and "foreigner" being almost inter-changeable words in the

* *Report on the census of India, 1901, Vol. I, P. 324.*

mouths of the Assamese, and the Bengali of the census tables probably includes many forms of speech of the Dravidian family which would be by no means understanded of the people of Nadia.

**Caste and tribes.**

Historically Nowgong has been somewhat of a border land. It is doubtful whether it ever contained the capital of a powerful prince, and, as a natural consequence, none of the great race castes, which are found in considerable numbers in other parts of the valley, are very strongly represented. It was never colonized by the Ahoms and the number of that caste now found within the district borders is comparatively small. It was some distance from the centre of the Chutiya power, and, in spite of the fact that after the downfall of that kingdom, the Ahoms deported many Chutiya families to other parts of the Brahmaputra Valley, there were less than 7,000 members of that caste in the district in 1901. The Kalitas, the caste that stands for middle class respectability in Assam, numbered a little over 16,000, and there were only 7,000 Kewat's who rank next after the Kalita according to Assamese ideas. The bulk of the population are members of the aboriginal tribes, the Mikirs (36,000), the Lalungs (29,000), the Kacharis (12,000), and the Koch, the Hindu caste to which the hillmen are admitted on conversion, (34,000.) In the following pages a short account is given of those indigenous castes which had 5,000 representatives or more in the district in 1901.*

* An alphabetical glossary of all castes censused in the Province will be found in chapter XI of the Census Report for 1901.

The Borias are a caste peculiar to Assam, which is formed from the offspring of Brahman and Ganak widows and their descendants. Boria is said to be derived from "bari", a widow, but the people prefer to call themselves Sut. This term is said by some to be connected with the word Sudra, and by others to be derived from Sut, the expounder of the Puranas, who was himself the son of a Brahman widow, but the most plausible explanation seems to be that it is an abbreviation of Suta, the name given in the Shastras to the offspring of a Brahman woman by a Vaisya or Kshatriya father. One authority defines a Boria as the child of a Brahman widow, and a Sut as the result of union between a Sudra widow and a Brahman, but it is doubtful whether this explanation is correct, as in the latter case the child would presumably be of the same caste as its mother. The children of Brahman girls who have attained puberty before marriage and so have to be married to men of a lower caste, are alse classed with Borias.

**Borias.**
**Males 3,708**
**Females 4091**

It is a singular fact that Borias are more numerous in Nowgong than in any other district, though the number of Brahmans there is comparatively small. The explanation offered by an educated Brahman of that district was that the gosains and mohants of Nowgong had put pressure upon householders to give away young Brahman widows in marriage to men of lower caste. The suggestion seems a strange one from the mouth of a Brahman, but is given for what it is worth. Agriculture is the ordinary occupation of the Borias,

10

and their manners and customs do not differ materially from those of other low caste Assamese. The Nowgong tahsil is the principal centre of the Boria population.

**Brahmans.** Males 3,356 Females 2,759

The majority of the Brahmans of Nowgong are Assamese as distinguished from Bengalis or up country men. They are said to be the descendants of Brahman families who were brought to Assam towards the end of the fifteenth century from Kanouj, Mithila, Gaur and other places. Most of them live by agriculture, though, as they are unable to touch the plough themselves, they have to get the actual work done for them by hired labourers. The poorer amongst them act as priests, a calling which is considered to entail a certain loss of social status.

**Chutiyas.** Males 3,216 Females 3,447

The Chutiyas, like the Koch and the Ahoms, are one of the race castes of Assam. Their physical appearance suggests a Mongolian origin, their language, which is still preserved amongst the Deoris or priestly clan, belongs to the Bodo family, and it seems probable that they are a section of the great Bodo race which includes the Garo, the Kachari, and the Tippera. It is supposed that their original home was in the hills through which the Subansiri makes its way, and that they entered the Assam Valley before the beginning of the 13th century A. D. They founded a kingdom in the neighbourhood of Sadiya, whose western boundary extended as far as the Disang river, and were overthrown by the Ahoms at the beginning of the 16th century. Their conquerors wisely deported the leading families to different parts of the Assam Valley, but the great mass of the Chutiyas

are still to be found in Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. The caste is divided into four subdivisions, Hindu, Ahom, Deori, and Borahi. The latter, as their name implies, are still unconverted and eat pork, but the number of Borahi Chutiyas is very small. The Ahom Chutiyas have for some generations been converts to Hinduism but in the social scale they rank below the Hindu Chutiya, and their presence in a house is said to debar a Brahman from drinking water there. The Ahom and Hindu Chutiyas can smoke but cannot eat together, and, in theory, cannot intermarry. A member of the Ahom section can, however, obtain a Hindu Chutiya girl if he is willing to pay a slightly higher price for her, but the bride sinks to the status of her husband. Hindu Chutiyas are sometimes united by the *hompura* ceremony, while the *chaklong* rite, which is the Ahom form of marriage, is in vogue amongst the Ahom Chutiyas. This ceremony consists in the interchange of the *temi* and *katari*, the box in which betel nut is carried, and the knife with which it is cut, the tying of the nuptial knot, and a feast to the friends and relations. A hole is then cut in the corner of the house through which the bride is removed. The Chutiyas are far from strict in their views on matrimonial matters, and one native gentlemen reports that 50 per cent of the so called married couples have performed no ceremony at all, and that a girl sometimes changes her husband nine or ten times. The social position of the caste is low, and almost all of them are petty cultivators. They burn their dead and perform the *sradh* ceremony at the

expiry of a month. Brahmans of inferior social standing act as their priests.

Jugis. Males 7,334. Females 7,711

The Jugis are a low caste whose traditional occupation is weaving, and who are looked down upon by their superiors in the social scale. Like other humble castes, they lay claim to a high origin. According to one account, they are the offspring of Brahman widows and ascetics, while others assert that they are descended from Gorakshanath, who was an incarnation of Siva. They recently submitted a memorial to the Local Administration asking for permission to assume the title of Nath, and they are endeavouring to improve their position by introducing the use of the *hompura* marriage ceremony. They are divided into two subdivisions the *polupohas* and *katanis*, and are ministered to by degraded Brahmans. Very few Jugis now earn their living as weavers, and the caste as a whole has taken to agriculture as a means of livelihood.

Kacharis. Males 6,700 Femeles 5 123

An account of the origin of the Kachari tribe has already been given in the preceding chapter. In Nowgong they are divided into two different sections. Those who live in the Barbhagia, Dhing, and Khatoalgaon mauzas near the Brahmaputra, are said to be Bodos akin to the Kacharis of Darrang, while those in the valley of the Kapili are Dimasa. The former are known as Jharuas or Chaiduaria Kacharis, the latter as Hojais. The two sections are quite distinct and have nothing to do with one another. There are no sub-divisions amongst the Jharuas, but the Hojais are said to be divided into the following clans most of which

are endogamous :—Rabha, Ramsa, Kheremia, Thengal Sonoal, and Jaladha. Their social position is of course low, but the Hindu gosains are willing to receive them as their disciples, and, if they are prepared to abandon their pork and beer, will even enrol them as members of the Koch caste.

Their villages are surrounded with fences, but present a dirty and untidy appearance, as pigs and fowls are allowed to wander about in every direction. Agriculture is their normal occupation, and rice the staple crop grown. But though efficient agriculturists, they have not that contempt for daily labour which is so marked a characteristic of the Assamese. They readily take work on tea gardens, and in 1901 nearly 14,000 Kacharis were censused on the plantations of Assam. Though still using their tribal form of speech in their own villages, most of them can speak and understand Assamese. The national religion is of the ordinary animistic type. The principal god is called Siju and is represented by the cactus which is to be seen growing in the courtyard of every Kachari house. In addition to Siju there are a large number of other spirits, most of which are hostile to men; and the main object of religion is to ascertain in times of trouble the name of the spirit responsible, and the way in which it may most easily be appeased.

Marriage is generally by purchase, a bride ranging in price from Rs. 60 to Rs. 100. Where the man is unable to provide this sum, he works for his father-in-law, a year's labour being usually reckoned as being

worth about Rs. 30. Pregnancy prior to marriage does not entail any social disability, provided that the father acknowledges the child and is a Kachari by caste.

**Kalita.**
**Males 8,419**
**Famales 7,907**

The following paragraphs are taken from the Census Report of 1901.

There is much uncertainty as to the origin of this caste. The popular explanation is that Kalitas are Kshatriyas, who fleeing from the wrath of Parasu Ram, cancealed their caste and their persons in the jungles of Assam, and were thus called Kul-lupta. Other theories are that they are Kayasthas degraded for having taken to cultivation, an explanation which in itself seems somewhat improbable, and is not supported, as far as I am aware, by any evidence, or that they are the old priestly caste of the Bodo tribe. The latter theory can hardly be said to account for their origin, and though it is possible that Kalitas may have originally acted as priests this fact throws little or no light on the problem of what the Kalitas are. The most plausible suggestion is, that they are the remains of immigrants from India who settled in Assam, at a time when the functional castes were still unknown in Bengal, and that the word "Kalita" was originally applied to all Indian immigrants who were not Brahmans. The Kalitas are divided into two main subdivisions, Bar and Saru, and into a number of professional sub-castes. In Upper Assam, Bar Kalitas are said to decline to use the plough, though they occassionally work with the spade, but there is no such restriction in Kamrup, where the great bulk of the caste is found. Cultivation is, in fact, the traditional occupation of the caste, and they even consent to work as coolies on tea gardens. The usual procedure for a Kalita who has succeeded in rising above the necessity for manual labour, and is no longer compelled to follow the plough, is to call himself a Kaist or Kayastha. Two explanations are given of the origin of the Saru Kalita—one that he is the offspring of persons who for three generations back have not been united by the "*Hom*" ceremony, the other that he is the child of a Bar Kalita and a Kewat woman. Whether the Bar Kalita can inter-marry with, and eat *kachchi* with the Saru Kalita seems open to question, and the practice apparently varies in different districts; but there seems to be no doubt that the functional subdivisions of the caste are debarred from the privilege of close intercourse with the Bar Kalita. These subdivisions are the Mili, Sonari, Kamar, Kumhar, Napit, Nat, Suri

and Dhoba. The first two inter-marry with the Saru Kalita, and also with the Kamar Kalita. The last four groups are endogamous. All these functional groups are to some extent looked down upon probably because followers of these professions, who were not true Kalitas, have occasionally succeeded in obtaining admission within their ranks; but the goldsmiths, from their wealth, have secured a good position in society. Kalitas have a good Brahman for their priest, and their water is taken by every caste, a fact which no doubt explains the high value attached to Kalita slaves in the time of the Assam Rajas, when two Koches could be purchased for the price of a single Kalita, though the Koch is generally the hardier and stronger man of the two.

Early marriage is common in Goalpara, but not in Assam Proper except amongst the upper sections of the caste. They take, in fact, a liberal view of the relations between the sexes, and cohabitation is the essential part of marriage. Well-to-do Kalitas are invariably united by the *hompura* rite and employ a Brahman, but the poorer people often content themselves with the *agchauldia* or *juron* ceremonies. Some authorities hold that this, though a valid form of marriage for the lower Assamese castes, is not sufficient for the Kalita. They regard the *hompura* rite as the one essential ceremony of purification, but it can be performed after cohabitation has begun, and sometimes takes place after the death of the husband. An unmarried girl who becomes pregnant does not forfeit the position in the society unless her lover is of a lower caste.

The great centre of the Kalita population is to found in the Samaguri and Nowgong tahsils and in the mauzas immediately to the east.

Many of the Kayasthas are foreigners and most of them earn their living as clerks or officers in the employ

**Kayasthas.**
Males 1,237
Females 912

of Government or of Managers of tea gardens. A certain number of Kayasthas are also really Kalitas who have risen above the necessity for performing manual labour.

Kewats
Males 6,764
Females 6,508

The Kewats are a respectable Hindu caste, from whose hands Brahmans will take water, and who according to Assamese ideas rank immediately after the Kalita. These remarks only hold good, however, of the Halwa or cultivating Kewats, as the Jaliya or fishing subdivision of the caste occupy a very humble position in the social scale, and are considered little better than the Nadiyals. The two sections of the caste have nothing whatever in common except the name Kewat or Kaibartta, but the number of Jaliya Kewats is comparatively small. The ordinary occupation of the caste is agriculture, but a few of them have succeeded in reaching that desirable position in which the pen takes the place of the ploughshare as a means of livelihood. A respectable Brahman acts as their priest. The Patias are a section of the Kewats who migrated to Nowgong from Upper Assam at the time of the Burmese invasions. Mat-making was their occupation and this was the origin of their name. Most of them have now taken to agriculture and intermarry with other Kewats.

Koches.
Males 16,745
Females 17,446

The Koches are one of the race castes of Assam. Originally they were an aboriginal tribe, apparently of Mongolian origin, which at the beginning of the 16th century rose to power under their great leader Viswa Singh. His son, Nar Narayan, extended his

conquests as far as Upper Assam, Tippera, and Manipur, and by the middle of the 16th century, the Koch king had attained to a position of such power that the aboriginal people were anxious to be enrolled as members of his tribe The result is that at the present day the name is no longer that of a tribe but of a caste into which new converts to Hinduism are enrolled. In Sibsagar and Lakhimpur these converts still retain their tribal names, and the Koch is a respectable Sudra caste, which is not broken up into various subdivisions. This is not the case in Lower Assam, and the different groups are there allotted a different status, which is dependent on the time that has elapsed since conversion took place, and the extent to which aboriginal habits have been shaken off. The principal subdivision is the Bar Koch, who are looked upon as a clean Sudra caste and from whose hands Brahmans will take water. The same distinction is not accorded to the Saru Koch, though they conform in most essentials to the somewhat lax standard of Hinduism exacted in Assam. Three other subdivisions are graded in accordance with the extent to which they have forsworn the attractions of unconverted life. The Kamtali abstain from intoxicating liquor and usually from pork, the Hiremia still keep pigs but no longer indulge in the use of liquor, while the Madahi are Hindus only to the extent of having taken *saran*, and still permit themselves great freedom in all matters of food and drink.

The Lalungs are a member of the Bodo family and their language forms a link between Bodo or Plains **Lalungs. Males 13,542 Females 15,443**

and Dimasa or Hills Kachari. Their name is said to be derived from *lal* (saliva), as, according to the tribal legends, they sprang from the saliva of a local god. The bulk of the tribe are to be found in the *chapari* north of the Kalang, the Raha tahsil, and the mauzas near the junction of the Kapili and the Kalang, but their numbers were terribly diminished between 1891 and 1901. *Kala azar* was especially prevalent amongst them, and in the short period of ten years the Lalungs declined in numbers from 46,658 to 28,985, a loss of life which it is positively painful to contemplate. Part of this decrease was possibly due to the inclusion of converted Lalungs in the ranks of the Koch, but there can be little doubt that the mortality amongst the tribe was quite appalling. According to their own account, they originally lived near Dimapur, but moved into the Jaintia Hills to avoid the necessity of providing the Kachari Raja with human milk, an article of diet for which he had an unreasonable craving. This legend is referred to in a history of the Dimarua Rajas compiled in 1772. A. D. This history has it that when Pratappur, a city on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, was captured by Arimatta, a large number of the inhabitants fled to Demera, a fertile region in the country of the Kachari Raja. This prince was in the habit of drinking human milk, a habit which earned for him the dislike of his subjects young and old. One day two of the king's messengers entered the house of a Mikir woman and found her nursing her baby. One man seized the infant while the other attempted to

milk the mother, who, furious with indignation, stretched him dead at her feet with a blow from a hoe. The Demera Raja feared that the Kachari prince would punish him for this murder, as it occurred within his territories, and migrated westwards to Dimarua with all his people.

Another legend represents the Lalungs as moving back from the hills into the plains, as they disliked the ruling of the Khasi chiefs that inheritance should go through the female line. Their own rules of inheritance are, however, strange. A woman may either enter her husband's clan or the husband may enter that of the wife, but all property and children of the marriage belong to the clan which was adopted at the time of the wedding. If a man enters his wife's clan he can leave it at her death but generally loses all claim to his property and children. In the plains the Lalungs live in houses similar to those occupied by the ordinary Assamese, but in the hills they build, like other aboriginal tribes, on platforms or *changs* raised a few feet above the ground. They are great opium eaters, and the indifference and idleness produced by that drug combined with the heavy cash expenditure incurred on its purchase, tend to keep them poor. The story of the Phulaguri riot, when the cultivation of opium was prohibited in 1861, has been already told in the preceding Chapter. The tribe is very faithful to its ancestral faith and the number of Lalungs who described themselves as Hindus in 1901 was very small. Their religion is of the ordinary animistic type, and is chiefly

concerned with the propitiation of evil spirits and with sacrifices to ensure prosperity. Like other animistic tribes they eat pork and fowl and drink rice beer; but as poultry and pigs are incompatible with gardening, the houses of the Lalungs are not surrounded by the dense groves of fruit trees found in the villages inhabited by the Assamese. The most important part of the marriage ceremony is the feast to the relatives and friends, and their girls, prior to marriage, are allowed a considerable degree of latitude as long as they do not confer their favours outside the tribe.

**Mikirs.**
**Males 17,992**
**Females 17,338**

According to Colonel Dalton, the Mikirs were originally settled in the North Cachar Hills but were driven westward into Jaintia territory by the Kacharis. Dissatisfied with the reception accorded to them there, they sent an embassy to the Ahom Governor at Raha, offering to place themselves under the protection of his master, but, as the luckless delegates were unable to make themselves understood, they were forthwith buried alive in a tank which that officer happened to be excavating. Hostilities ensued, but the Mikirs were soon suppressed, and were settled in the hills that bear their name, though a considerably colony are still to be found in south Kamrup and the northern slopes of the Khasi Hills. They are divided into four tribes Chintong, Ronghang, Amri and Dumrali, and these tribes are again subdivided into various exogamous groups. In the hills the Mikirs live by *jhum* or shifting cultivation, and raise crops of cotton, chillies, rice, and vegetables. All the members of a family live in

one house, which is thus of considerable size. Their religion is of the usual animistic type, and is chiefly concerned with the propitiation of evil spirits. Infant marriage is unknown and sexual license within the tribe prior to mariage is tolerated. A full account of the Mikirs will be found in the monograph now under preparation.

**Nadiyals.** **Males 9,346** **Females 9,541**

The Doms, or as they prefer to call themselves, Nadiyals are the boating and fishing caste of Assam. They are anxious to assume the name Jaliya Kaibartta, but the Kaibarttas are unquestionably a different caste, though their manners and customs do not differ materially from that of the Assamese Nadiyal, except in the following particular. The Kaibarttas decline to use the *ghakata* net, and in theory only, sell their fish on the river's bank within a paddles throw of the boat, whereas the Nadiyals regularly take their catch to market. The Nadiyals are probably descended from the aboriginal race of Doms, the ruins of whose forts are still to be seen in India, but migrated to Assam before the Dom caste had been assigned the degrading functions now performed by them in Bengal. They are cleanly in their habits and particular in their observance of the dictates of the Hindu religion, and account for the objectionable expression "Dom," which undoubtedly they have borne for centuries, by saying that they were the last of the Assamese to be converted from Buddhism. They are darker in complexion than most of the Assamese, but have a good physique and by no means uncomely faces. Their women are most

prolific, and the Dom villages are full of fat brown babies. They rank very low in the social scale, and, according to Assamese ideas, are superior only to the Brittial Baniya or Hari. The bulk of the caste still live by fishing, and education has made but little progress among them. Marriage does not take place till the girl is fully grown, and they are free from any puritanical notions with regard to the relations between the sexes. Their priests are said to be descended from a Brahman father and Nadiyal mother, but for all practical purposes they are Nadiyals and intermarry with Nadiyal girls. The bulk of the caste are found in the Nowgong and Raha tahsils near the banks of the Kalang. In the reign of Kamaleswar (1795-1809 A.D.) all Doms were compelled to have a fish tattooed upon their foreheads, and in 1855 Major Butler reported that there were still men living in Nowgong who were branded with this mark.

**Namasudras.**
**Males 2 628**
**Females 2,671**

The Chandals are a boating and fishing caste, said by Manu to have sprung from the union of a Brahman woman with a Sudra, and therefore to be the lowest of the low. They are a cheerful and hardworking people but are heartily despised by their Hindu neighbours, and a degraded Brahman acts as their priest. A section of the Chandals has formed itself into a separate caste called Hira. They work as potters but do not use the wheel, laying on the clay in strips. Many of the Chandals have now taken to agriculture. Most of them live in the western portion of the district, north of the Kalang.

Classified by religion the population of Nowgong **Religion.** was distributed in the following proportions in 1901.— Hinduism 64 per cent. Muhammadanism 5 per cent. Animism 31 per cent. The three principal sects of Hinduism recorded at the census of 1901 were Saktism, Sivaitism, and Vaishnavism.

Nearly eight per cent. of the Hindus in 1901 **Saktism.** described themselves as followers of Sakti, but almost five-sixths of the Saktists were censused on the tea plantations or the railway. The great majority of these persons were no doubt so styled, because they ate meat and drank liquor, though this in a garden cooly is not so much an indication of his adherence to the goddess Kali as of the uncertainty of his title to the name of Hindu at all. Saktism is a foreign growth in Assam and Vaishnavism is the national form of Hinduism.

Sivaitism is the counterpart of Saktism and is con- **Sivaitism** cerned with the worship of the procreative energy as manifested in the male. In 1901, only 644 persons in Nowgong professed this special form of Hinduism.

A considerable number of Hindus did not attempt to **Vaishnavism** specify their sect in 1901, but of those who committed themselves to this extent 90 per cent. declared their adherence to Vaishnavism. This form of Hinduism is thus described in the Census Report for 1901.

"Sankar Deb, the apostle of Vaishnavism in Assam, was born in 1449 A. D., and was the descendant of a Kayastha, who, according to tradition, had been sent, with six of his caste fellows and seven Brahmans, to Assam by the king of Kanaijpur as a substitute for the Assamese prime minister, who had fled to

his court for refuge. The licentious rites of Saktism had aroused his aversion while he was still a boy, and his desire to found a purer system of religion was increased by the teachings of Chaitanya in Bengal. Like most reformers, he met with vehement opposition from the supporters of the established order, and he was compelled to leave his home in Nowgong and to fly to the inhospitable jungles of the Barpeta subdivision, where, in conjunction with his disciple, Madhab Deb, he founded the Mahapurushia sect, the main tenets of which are the prohibition of idolatry and sacrifice, disregard of caste and the worship of God by hymns and prayers only. Sankar himself was, like a true follower of Chaitanya, a vegetarian, but the low-caste people, who formed a large proportion of his converts, found his injunction a counsel of perfection, and the Mahapurushias are accordingly allowed to eat the flesh of game, but not of domesticated animals, though, with a subtlety only too common in this country, they observe the letter of the law, prohibiting the spilling of blood, by beating their victims to death. The great centre of the Mahapurushia faith is the Sattra at Barpeta, where a large number of persons persist in living huddled together, in defiance of all the laws of sanitation, and resist with surprising pertinacity all efforts to improve their condition. They are a peculiarly bigoted people, and are strongly opposed to vaccination, with the result that the mortality from small-pox in the neighbourhood of the Sattra is exceptionally high. It was not long, however, before the Brahmans re-asserted their influence, and shortly after Sankar's death, two of his followers, who are members of this caste, established sects, called, after their founders, Damodariya and Hari Deb Panthi, which are distinguished from the Mahapurshias by the respect paid to the distinctions of caste, and a certain tolerance of idolatry. A fourth sect was founded by one Gopal Deb, but it originally seems to have differed in no way from the Mahapurshia creed, and subsequently its followers adopted the teaching of Deb Damodar. There is, in fact, practically no distinction between the Damodariyas, the Hari Deb Panthis, and the Gopal Deb Panthis, and the Vaishnavites of the Assam Valley can be divided into the Mahapurushia and Bamunia or "other Vaishnavas", as they have been called in the census tables. The former will accept a Sudra as a religious guide, worship no God but Krishna, and are uncompromising in their hostility to idols; the latter will only recognise Brahmans as their Gosains, permit the adoration of other deities, such as Siva and Kali, in addition to that of Krishna, and allow sacrifices to be offered in their honour."

The Bamunias are also more liberal in their diet, and will eat goats, pigeons and ducks, a form of food that is not allowed to orthodox Vaishnavites in Bengal. Madhab Deb, like most religious reformers, was a strict disciplinarian. The story goes that the breach between him and Gopal Deb, arose one stormy day when the party were returning to Barpeta by boat. Gopal Deb, anxious for the safety of his teacher, apostrophised the storm clouds passing overhead, and begged them to restrain their fury till Madhab had reached the shore in safety. This innocent remark was construed into an invocation of Varuna the god of rain, Gopal Deb was denounced as an idolater and was incontinently by order of Madhab, flung out of the boat. Such treatment was enough to damp the enthusiasm of the most ardent disciple. Gopal Deb, wallowing in the water, gallantly shouted out defiance to his former leader, and warned him that in future he would be treated with uncompromising opposition. The proportion of Mahapurushias in Nowgong is exceptionally high, and in 1901 about two-thirds of the Vaishnavas declared themselves to be members of this sect.

**The Vaishnavite Gosains.**

The chief exponents of the Vaishnavite faith are the gosains who live, each in his *sattra* or college, surrounded by his *bhokots* or resident desciples. Many of these *sattras* are supported by large grants of revenue free land, made by the Ahom kings and confirmed by the British Government, and the gosain receives an annual contribution, varying from four or five annas to two rupees or more, from each of his

*shishyas* or non-resident disciples. This subscription is generally paid through a *medhi* or agent, who holds an important position in the social economy of the village, and often ranks with the *gaobura* or village headman appointed by the Government. At certain seasons of the year the gosains tour through the villages, are visited by their followers, and receive into the Hindu faith members of the aboriginal tribes who are considered worthy of admission. These progresses are generally attended with considerable pomp and dignity. If the journey is made during the rainy season the gosain and his followers travel in state barges, whose curved prows and slender lines distinguish them from the ordinary rough-built country boat. Most of the *sattras* own one or more fine elephants, and these ponderous animals take a prominent part in the procession that escorts the spiritual leader of the people. The gosain himself is carried in a litter, drums are beaten and cymbals clashed before him, and when he alights he is not permitted to touch the ground with his bare feet. It is not always that the influence of the priest is used for good. Bigotry and intolerance and a dislike to change or progress in any form are often found in those who profess to be the ministers of God, but from reproaches of this kind the Vaishnava gosains of Upper Assam are almost entirely free. Dignified but courteous in their demeanour, they have ever been noted for their loyalty to Government, and their nfluence is altogether beneficial in encouraging purity of life and obedience to the authorities. The

bulk of the Assamese Hindus in Nowgong are disciples of one or the other of the following gosains, whose *sattras* are situated on the Majuli in Jorhat—Auniati, Dakhinpat, Garamur, Kamalabari, Elengi, Karatipur, and Mahara. The Matak gosain of Lakhimpur has also a certain following in the district.*

The typical *sattra* consist of a *namghor* or prayer house, which is a large open shed supported on massive wooden pillars. The roof is generally made of thatch supported on massive wooden pillars, and at one end there is often a shrine in which the titular idol is carefully screened from the vulgar eye. The floor is made of beaten earth, and there are generally a few drums and cymbals lying about which are used in the daily ritual. The house of the gosain is situated near the *namghor*, and, in close proximity, there are store rooms which contain a liberal stock of rice, and all the various products of the country, fine silk cloths, and a valuable collection of native jewellery. The resident *bhokots* live in lines of cottages. The whole premises are usually enclosed by a fence or wall, which is entered through a rustic lichgate, and, as they often contain really magnificent umbrageous trees, the general effect is very picturesque. In the more important *sattras* gosains and *bhokots* alike are celibates, and the place resembles some mediæval monastery; but in the smaller institutions, a category to The Sattra.

* For an account of the Mataks reference should be made to the Gazetteer of the Lakhimpur district.

which all the *sattras* in Nowgong belong, celibacy is not enforced and women and children are found living round the *namghor*. Hinduism is so liberal in Assam that in many of these colleges the presiding priest is a Kayastha, often no doubt a Kalita, and Assamese Brahmans are sometimes to be found who consent to accept as their spiritual guide a man of lower caste.

Statemnt A appended to this chapter shows the situation of each *sattra* in Nowgong, the date of its foundation, and the amount of land which is held on privileged terms. Though Kuruabahi is a comparatively small *sattra* and holds but a small area of land at privileged rates, it is one of the four premier *sattras* of Assam, the other three being Auniati, Dakhinpat, and Garamur. The founder of the three great *sattras* on the Majuli enjoined celibacy upon their inmates, but such an injunction obviously requires that provision should be made elsewhere for each succeeding generation of gosains. The people of Kuruabahi were accordingly allowed to marry, so that from their community priests could be obtained who had grown up amongst the traditions and surroundings of a *sattra* and who could be trusted to carry on the policy of their predecessors.

**Muhammadanism.** Nowgong never came much under the influence of the Muhammadans, and in 1901 less than 5 per cent. of the population professed the faith of Islam. Nearly all of these persons were members of the Sunni sect.

The Muhammadans of Nowgong are said to be a fairly enlightened, if not a numerous community. The villagers

understand the principals of their faith, and it is still fairly free from Hindu superstitions. They try, however, to ascertain an auspicious day for the commencement of any undertaking, and sometimes consult a Hindu pandit for this purpose. They also observe the *nowai tolani* and *nowai* ceremonies, when a girl attains puberty or is married, and bathe their cattle on the occasion of the *Bihu*. A class of semi-Muhammadans called *dhakari* worship Bishohari the goddess of snakes. The Morias are a section of the Muhammadans who are said to be the descendants of 900 men who were taken prisoner when Turbuk was defeated in 1532. They were first employed to tend the Ahom elephants but offered grass to their tails instead of to their trunks. They were then ordered to grow paddy but they plastered the seedlings over with mud. They were finally made braziers, and at the present day are to some extent looked down upon by their co-religionists. Service is usually held in a small thatched hut, and there is no organized system for the propagation of the faith. In spite of this conversions occasionally take place, and the decrease amongst Muhammadans during the last decade was only 11 per cent. as compared with 25 per cent. in the district as a whole.

**Animism.** Nearly one-third of the population are still faithful to the primitive forms of tribal religion which are usually described as animistic, most of whom are living in the Mikir Hills or in the Raha tahsil and the mauzas to the south.

Most men find considerable difficulty in giving a

clear and intelligible account of the faith that is in them, and these simple people are no exception to the general rule. Broadly speaking their religious beliefs seem to fall under the following heads. Unlike the German metaphysician, they have no uncomfortable doubts with regard to their own existence and the existence of the material world. To account for the production of these visible phenomena, they put forward various theories, which are hardly more improbable than the accounts of the creation given in most religious systems. But the way in which the world came into existence is, after all, a matter of no very great importance, and the essential object of religion is to ensure a comfortable passage through life to its followers. No country or community is exempt from pain and trouble, and to the dwellers in the plains of India has been allotted a fairly liberal portion of the ills of life. When the cattle die, or small-pox or cholera visit the village, or other trouble comes, it is only natural to suppose that somebody or something is the cause of these misfortunes. The simple tribesmen then endeavour to ascertain the particular spirit from whose displeasure they are suffering, and to appease him in whatever way they can.

But, apart from special pujas of this nature, it is usually thought desirable to sacrifice at least once a year to the Deity to secure immunity from sickness and good harvests. Amongst the Hojais and Lalungs this sacrifice was invested with great ceremony, and the most acceptable of all offerings, human life, was made

prior to our occupation of the country. The connection between religion and morality is very slight, and the Lord their God is a jealous god, whose wrath must be averted by the proper offerings. Amongst the Mikirs success in theft is said to be due to skill in sacrifice, and though they believe in a future life, and have some idea of a special state of bliss, entrance to this heaven depends upon the somewhat peculiar qualifications of having danced the one legged dance and eaten the fat of the great lizard, and duck, pheasant, and cocoanut.

The Hojais on the other hand seem to be very doubtful as to the existence of a life beyond the grave and certainly do not trouble themselves very much about it.

**Minor religions.** The religions which were not strongly represented in the district in 1901, were Jains (243), Sikhs (214), Buddhists (49), and Brahmos (7). The Jains are Kaiyas or Marwari merchants who have succeeded in securing a practical monopoly of the wholesale trade of the Assam Valley. Like the English, they are temporary visitors and have not permanently settled in the Province. The Sikhs are the descendants of soldiers who came for service to Assam about 1825 or a little later. The original settlers have inter-married with Kewats, Koches, and Kalitas, and all, except the latest arrivals from the Punjab, have now an admixture of Assamese blood. The majority have taken to agriculture but their community includes a few carpenters and contractors. They are found in the Singaon and Hatipara villages in the *sadr* tahsil and at Chaparmukh. Most of the Buddhists were censused on the railway, and the fact that they

were nearly all males, suggests that they were temporary visitors.

Christianity. The number of Christians in Nowgong is smaller than in any district in the Province except the Lushai Hills. A branch of the Baptist mission is located in Nowgong town, with an off-shoot in the Mikir Hills, and most of the native Christians were members of that sect.

Number of Native Christians.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1881 | .. 204 |
| 1891 | .. 354 |
| 1901 | .. 496 |

From the statement in the margin it appears that Christianty has been spreading steadily if slowly amongst the natives during the past twenty years, but it is doubtful whether at present it has many attractions for the plains-men in Assam. The number of degraded castes is comparatively small, and, if the animistic tribesman once makes up his mind to abandon the religion of his fathers, he finds greater attractions from the social point of view in Hinduism than in Christianity. The gosains show considerable tact in the treatment of their converts, and do not expect them to abandon all at once the forbidden food to which for many generations they have been accustomed. The desire for material progress has not much hold upon the natives of Nowgong, and they prefer an idle opium eating life with the additional social distinction that Hinduism gives, to the more strenuous existence enjoined by the teaching of Christ's ministers.

Occupation. Nowgong is a purely rural area and nine-tenths of the population in 1901 were supported by agriculture. As is only natural in a district in which there are broad tracts of land available for cultivation, the bulk of these

agriculturists are small farmers who hold direct from the state, and the number of tenants is inconsiderable. About one-twelfth of these cultivators were garden coolies, a proportion much lower than that prevailing in Darrang and Upper Assam. The only other occupation which supported as much as one per cent of the total population was general labour, a head which included the coolies engaged on the construction of the railway. The extraordinary preponderance of agriculture as a means of occupation is due to two causes. In the first place the district is a purely rural one. It contains only one small town, and the urban population is less than two per cent of the whole. There is moreover an almost complete absence of the functional castes. There is no village barber or dhobi in Assam Proper, and, though there are a considerable number of Jugis in Nowgong, they no longer earn their living at the loom. It would hardly be correct to say that they have forsaken their traditional occupation, as they, in common with most of the villagers in the district, are weavers; but the work is carried on by the women, and only enough clothing is produced to satisfy the requirements of the family, or perhaps to provide a few silk cloths to sell when money is urgently required. Occupation has not been specialized in the Assam Valley, and each household supplies almost all its simple wants There are a considerable number of fishermen, but many of them have either abandoned their traditional occupation for agriculture, or have at any rate preferred to return it as a more respectable avocation

on the census schedules. The proportion of priests is fairly high, but that of teachers and village doctors low. Both the Assamese and hillmen are cultivators pure and simple. They have no aptitude for trade, no liking for the arts and crafts, no desire for any other means of livelihood than the plough and hoe. In the social as well as the material world great masses tend to attract the smaller units by their weight. It is the fashion amongst the natives of Nowgong to earn their living as Adam did. There is an abundance of land in the district, so that there is no reason why every man should not be in the fashion, and, as far as possible, he is.

At the census of 1901 the occupations of the people in Nowgong were divided into the following main classes.

| | Total Number | Percentage. |
|---|---|---|
| Government ... ... ... | 753 | 0 |
| Pasture and agriculture ... ... | 235,751 | 90 |
| Personal services ... ... ... | 2,867 | 1 |
| Preparation and supply of material substances | 8 905 | 4 |
| Commerce, transport and storage ... ... | 3,253 | 1 |
| Professions ... ... ... | 1.883 | 1 |
| Unskilled labour, not agricultural ... ... | 5,132 | 2 |
| Means of subsistence independant of occupation | 2,616 | 1 |

In the second part of the Census Report details will be found for the 520 separate heads into which the occupations of the people were divided, but in the immense majority of cases the figures are so small as to hardly repay examination.

**Marriage customs.**

The forms of marriage in vogue are the *hompura** or

* A description of this ceremony as practiced in Assam will be found on p. 63 of the Census Report for 1901.

full Hindu rite, when the sacred fire is lighted and a priest is engaged to perform the ceremony; the *kharu moni pindha*, in which a feast is given to the friends and relations and ornaments are given to the girl; and the system under which the bridegrom, who is called a *caponiya*, enter the house of his prospective father-in-law, and works for his wife as Jacob worked for Rachel. Brahmans, Kayasthas, and well-to-do Kalitas invariably perform the *hompura* ceremony, which sometimes costs as much as Rs. 500. This expenditure is incurred on the purchase of ornaments and clothing, on the payments of priests, musicians, and palki bearers, and on a feast to the relations and friends, the principal ingredients of which are rice, molasses, curds, and betel nut.

The practice of taking a bride price is still fairly common amongst the lower castes, but it is falling into disfavour and is by no means as universal as in Kamrup. A girl can sometimes be obtained for Rs. 20, but, if she is an expert weaver and is generally skilled in house work, the parents will sometimes ask for and obtain five or six times that sum. An Assamese woman is a house keeper, weaver, and cook as well as a wife, and in many cases a farm labourer as well; and parents and guardians do not always see why a young man should be given such a valuable help-meet, when they have had the expense of feeding and clothing her when she was too young to work, and paying for the various ceremonies that are prescribed by local custom at certain stages of her career. If the price

demanded is too high the young people often take the law into their own hands, and the girl arranges to have herself abducted; as, when her lover has once obtained possession of her person, he is generally able to induce the parents to be more moderate in their demands. This form of marriage by capture is very common amongst the Nadiyals, Brittial Baniyas, and Charals or Namasudras; and, according to the mauzadar of Garubat, nine girls out of ten belonging to these castes are abducted in this manner. The *caponiya* is a person who works for his prospective father in-law in lieu of making a cash payment for the bride. He is generally accorded all the privileges of a husband as soon as the parents of the girl are satisfied that he intends to remain faithful to his engagement. Marriage even by the simplest rites entails a heavy charge upon the bridegroom. Twenty rupees is the lowest estimate quoted by any of the officers consulted, and the ordinary cultivator often spends between one and two hundred rupees upon his wedding, a sum out of all proportion either to his capital or income. The result is that many men have to borrow at high rates of interest to obtain a wife, and are often crippled for years by the expenses incurred on the occasion of their marriage.

**Amusements and festivals.** Feasts, singing parties, and ***bhaonas*** or simple theatrical performances are the principal amusements of the villagers. The ***bhaonas*** are often held in temporary sheds constructed by the road side, and on a winter's morning the traveller who is early abroad, frequently comes upon parties of revellers still lingering over the

pleasure of the previous night. The *doljatra* or festival in honour of Krishna in Febrary or March, when the image of the god is swung to and fro, and the people pelt one another with red powder in memory of his amorous exploits with the milkmaids of Brindaban, is observed inde d, but with much less ceremony than in other parts of India. On the gardens, however, and amongst the foreign cooly population this festival, which is styled the *fagua*, is an occasion of very boisterous merry-making. The Janmastami in honour of Krishna's birth in August or September, and the Sivaratri, in memory of Siva in March, are kept as fasts rather than feasts. The Durga Puja is observed by Saktists, but, as this sect has only a small following in Nowgong, it is not a local festival of much importance.

The special festivals of the Assamese are the three *Bihus*, and the *sradh* ceremonies of Sankar Deb and Madhab Deb, the founders of the Mahapurushia sect. The Kartik *Bihu* is celebrated on the last day of Asvin (Oct. 14th), and is not an occasion of very much importance. Hymns are sung in honour of God, and in place of their usual meal of hot rice and curry the people take cold food such as curds, molasses, plantains, and cold rice. The Magh *Bihu* is the harvest home, and begins on the last day of Pous (January 14th). For weeks beforehand tall heaps of rice straw piled round a central pole are a prominent feature in the rural landscape. At the dawn of day the villagers bathe and warm their chilled bodies at these bonfires which must be most acceptible to young and old alike, as at this **The Bihus.**

season of the year the morning are always cold and generally foggy. The Magh *Bihu* is to some extent a children's festival, and most of the jollification is confined to the young children who sing and dance, and feast in small grass huts that have been specially constructed for the purpose. The Baisakh *Bihu* which begins on the last day of Choet (April 14th) is held in honour of the new year. The cattle are smeared with oil, mixed with matikalai, turmeric, and rice and are then taken to the nearest stream and bathed. The villagers go from house to house visiting their friends and relatives and present one another with cloths and other products of the country. Buffalo fights are organised in the rice fields but these contests are rather tame affairs, and the animals very seldom injure one another. The villagers leap, wrestle, and race together and try to see who can run the furthest without drawing breath (*han khel*) Other games played are a kind of chevy and an Indian variety of tip cheese. Various games of ball, which include a good deal of wrestling and pushing, are also played. The festival is an occasion of some license, as boys and girls dance together in the fields and sing suggestive songs, and lapses from chastity between members of the same caste are considered almost venial. It is at this season of the year that run-away matches are most common, and during the next few weeks the outraged but avaricious parent complaining of the abduction of his daughter is by no means an uncommon sight in the local courts. The *sradh* ceremony of Sankar Deb is celebrated in August—September and that of Madhab three days before the Janmastami. All

work is laid aside on these days and the people devote their time to feasting and the singing of hymns.

The temples of Nowgong are small and unimportant, and none of them have any pretensions to architectural merit. But this is nothing strange, as Saktism was never warmly accepted by the inhabitants of the district, and it is not to be expected that many shrines would be erected in its honour, or that those which existed would be carefully preserved. Statement B appended to this chapter shows the position of the various temples supported by grants of land. All except two, the temple at Kamakhya and the Sada Siva temple, are wretched temporary buildings of reeds and thatch. **Temples.**

Apart from the *sattras* and temples and the shrines to which reference has been made in the account of the mountain system of the district, there are not many sacred places in Nowgong. There are the remains of a temple dedicated to Buragohain in the Bar Kolagaon forest in the Jagial mauza, and in the Namati mauza there is a sacred pool called the Akashi Ganga in Parkhoa village Barduar in Dhing mauza is venerated as it was once the residence of Sankar Deb, and there is an altar to Mahadeo, which is still the scene of local sacrifices, in the Sahari mauza. Traces of the primitive form of Bodo worship are also to be seen near Silghat where there are some rock sculptures which are said to be sacred to Kechakhati, the savage goddess who delighted in the quivering flesh of the human victim, and to whom for many centuries a male without blemish was offered in the little copper temple near Sadiya. **Other sacred places.**

## STATEMENT A.

### *Sattras.*

| Mauza. | Name of Sattra. | Name of founder and date of foundation. | Area of Nisfikhiraj land held. |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Bighas. |
| | BRAHMAN GOSAINS. | | |
| Bhelenguri | Brahmachari ... | Bishambhar Brahmachari about 1775 A. D. .. | 1,063 |
| Chalchali ... | Harimisra ... | Madha Sargi Sarma ... ... .. | 337 |
| Dhing .. | Dumdumia ... | Bangshi Gopal Sarma about 1790 A. D. ... | 583 |
| Hatichong ... | Karassung ... | Parusuttam Deb about 1660 A. D. ... ... | 1,222 |
| " ... | Kuruabahi ... | Keshab Chandra Goswami about 1570 A. D. ... | 605 |
| Nowgong ... | Jakhalabandha ... | Krishna Deb Goswami about 1558 A. D. ... | ... |
| | KAYASTHA GOSAINS. | | |
| Chutial ... | Uppar Chutiai ... | Ram Chandra Mohunt about 1730 A. D. ... | 29 |
| Dandua | Kalsila ... | ... | 243 |
| Dhing ... | Batadraba Barhishya ... | Bam Datta Mohunt about 1775 A. D. ... | 647 |
| | Do. Chotahishya .. | Chandibar Gosain about 1800 A. D. ... | 497 |
| Hatichong .. | Aibheta ... | Ai Lakshmi Bewa widow of Kesho Rai about 1790 A. D. ... ... ... | 1,458 |
| Mikirbheta ... | Itakhuli ... | Bishnath Mohunt about 1800 A. D. ... | 184 |
| " ... | Kuji ... | Damudar Ata about 1660 A. D. ... | 485 |
| | Sukdal Barbari and Do. Sarubari | Bhogali Ata about 1755 A. D. ... | 105<br>107 |
| Pubtharia ... | Rupnaryan ... | Padma Narayan Mahanta about 1775 A. D. ... | 488 |

None of these *sattras* except Kuruabahi are of any great importance, and as has been already pointed out the bulk of the inhabitants of Nowgong are disciples of the gosains residing on the Majuli.

## STATEMENT B.

*Temples.*

| Mauza. | Name of Temple. | Name of founder and date of foundation. | Area of Nisfikhiraj land held. |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Bighas. |
| Barbhagia ... | Ambikanath ... | Behari alias Janardan Sarma about 1705 A. D. ... | 485 |
| " ... | Nandikisore ... | Not known ... | 583 |
| " ... | Saubhagya Madhab ... | Kadamba Sarma about 1730 A. D. .. | 531 |
| Pubtharia ... | Dulal Madhab ... | Kolia Thakur about 1730 A. D. ... | 334 |
| | Kamakhya ... | Kendu Koloi Barthakur in 1745 A. D. ... | 632 |
| Sadar Tahsil ... | Sadasib ... | Uma Maheswar about 1690 A. D. ... | 421 |

## CHAPTER IV.

# AGRICULTURE AND FORESTS.

Crops grown—Rice—Mustard—Pulses—Fibres—Storage and threshing of grain—Agricultural implements—Sugarcane—Preparation of molasses—Causes affecting productiveness of land—Garden crops—Yield and value of crops—Floods—Irrigation and attempts to improve the system of cultivation—Live stock—Grazing grounds—Cattle disease—Commencement of tea industry—Labour force—Soil—Varieties of plant—System of cultivation—System of manufacture—Outturn and prices—Forests.

**Crops grown** The staple food crop of the district is rice which in 1902-03 covered 56 per cent. of the total cropped area. Other important crops are tea (5 per cent.), and orchard and garden crops (8 per cent.), but a large part of the area shown under this head, is occupied by the homestead, and it is doubtful whether as much as one half is actually under cultivation. Mustard occupied 19 per cent. of the total cropped area and til (*sesamum indicum*), which is grown much more extensively in Nowgong than in the other districts of Assam Proper, nearly one per cent. Miscellaneous food grains, nearly all of which are different forms of pulse, formed 6 per cent., and sugarcane 0·7 per cent. of the total. Wheat, barley, and gram, the food grains of Upper India, are grown in small patches by immigrants from those parts, but the total area under

these three crops in 1902-03 was only 37 acres. Cotton is grown by the Mikirs in the hills, and covers an estimated area of about 2,000 acres. The area under this and other crops since 1901 is shown in Table VI. The general system of cultivation and the manner in which the staple crops are raised is described in the following paragraphs.

Rice falls under three main heads *sali*, *ahu*, and *bao*, the proportion of the total rice area normally occupied by each of these three classes, being *sali* 51 per cent., *ahu* 30 per cent., and *bao* 19 per cent. *Sali* dhan or transplanted paddy, is first sown in little beds or nurseries (*palang*) near the homestead. The land is broken up in April or May, and is ploughed five or six times. The size of the nursery varies with the area to be planted out, but generally stands to the rice fields in the proportion of about 1 to 15 or 20. The seed, which has been selected from the largest ears of the previous year's crop, is sown broadcast over the bed in May and June, and during the time that this operation is going on, water is sprinkled over the bed from a bamboo scoop (*lahoni*). It comes up a rich emerald green, and at the beginning of summer these patches of the brightest green herbage are a striking feature in the rural landscape. In the meanwhile the fields are being got ready for the reception of the seedlings. The husbandman starts ploughing as soon as the soil is softened by the spring rain, and repeats the process from four to eight times till he has reduced the land to a rich puddle of mud. After the third ploughing the field is harrowed, the little embankments, a few inches high, intended to retain the water, Rice. Sali.

are repaired, and if the fields adjoin the road or the village site they are fenced in with split bamboo. When the seedlings are about seven or eight weeks old, they are taken from the nursery bed and carried in large bundles (*gosa*) to the field. Here they are planted out in handfuls, each of which contains four or five plants. The distance at which these are planted from one another depends upon the fertility of the soil, and the time of year at which the work is done. If the plants are transplanted early in the season, they can be placed at intervals of two feet, but later on the distance is reduced to nine inches. It is not unfrequently the practice to steep the young plants in water before they are planted out, and if they seem too luxuriant, the tops are cut off when they are removed from the nursery.

Transplanting goes on from the beginning of July to the middle of September, and is generally carried out by women. The work is of a most arduous description, and involves stooping for hours in a field of liquid mud, under the rays of a burning tropical sun. Before the end of the rains the crop is fully grown, though the ears are still empty, but about the beginning of October they begin to fill, and the field to turn to a rich yellow. From the middle of November to the middle of January, harvesting is going on. The women grasp a handful of the ears and cut them off about 8 inches below the head. These handfuls (*muthi*) are tied up with a piece of straw and left in the field for a few days to dry. When the grain is ready to be transported to the granary the *muthis* are made into larger sheaves. Six to eight *muthis*

form a *thor* or *jhap*, and five or six *thors* a *dangari*. A *dangari* is then affixed to either end of a sharp pointed bamboo called *biriya*, and the load, which is called a *bhar* and carried across the shoulder, is taken to the homestead by the men.

The different kinds of *sali* dhan fall under two main divisions *sali* proper, which is generally known as *bar* in other districts, and *lahi*. *Lahi* ripens earlier than *sali* and, though the grain is of a finer quality, the yield is appreciably smaller. It is planted on the higher fields which dry up first at the conclusion of the rains, and are thus not fit for *sali*. Very little *sali* dhan is grown in the *chapari* near the Brahmaputra, *i,e.*, in the mauzas of Mayang, Gerua Bokani, Ghugua, and Juria, though in Dhing and Barbhagia there is a considerable area under this variety of rice.

*Bao* dhan is sown broadcast about the end of March, the field having been previously prepared by four or five ploughings. It is grown in flooded tracts and the embankments made between the fields are smaller than in the case of *sali*, and are sometimes dispensed with altogether. It ripens about the beginning of November and is harvested in the same way as *sali*. *Bao* dhan is generally sown in the intermediate tract which lies too low for the growth of *sali*, but is not so much exposed to flood as the riparian flats. Mikirbheta and Hatichong are the two mauzas in which most *bao* is grown, but it is also sown in the higher parts of the *chapari* near the Brahmaputra. East and south of the Kalang there is very little *bao*.

**Bao dhan.**

**Ahu dhan.**

**Two kinds of place where ahu grown.**

*Ahu* dhan is usually sown broadcast, and is grown under two different sets of conditions. The greater part of the *ahu* raised is sown on the *chaparis* which fringe the Brahmaputra, and in the Gerua Bokani mauza, there are over 7,000 acres under this kind of rice. The usual procedure is as follows. In May the jungle is cut down and burnt, and the land left till towards the end of the rains. The jungle, that has sprung up in the interval is cleared in the same way, the process being known as *gojola kata*, and ploughing begins in January. The field is ploughed three times and harrowed, and the clods are broken up by a mallet. Another ploughing and harrowing follow, the seed is sown and the land again ploughed and harrowed to ensure that the grain becomes thoroughly mixed with the soil. When the plants are about six inches high, and catch the wind (*botah boloah,*) they are harrowed again and weeded, and finally harvested about the middle of July. The crop is, however, a precarious one and is liable to be destroyed by a sudden rise of the river. The plants can live under water for as much as a week, but if after this time the floods do not retire they are permanently destroyed. *Ahu* is generally grown on the *chaparis* in conjunction with mustard, and no jungle cutting is of course required when the soil has been already cleared for the oil seed crop. The same field is seldom cropped for more than three years in succession. The weeds which were unable to find a lodging under the dense growth of *ikra* (*saccharum arundinaceum*), *khagari* (*saccharum spontaneum*)

and *nal* (*phragmites roxburghii*), with which the land in its natural state is covered, soon spring up when once the jungle has been cleared and after the third year, it is less trouble to burn fresh jungle than to clear the old fields of weeds, while by a change of site, the peasant gets the further advantage of the manure of ashes for his next year's crop. *Ahu* is sometimes sown in conjunction with *bao*, in the hope that if the earlier crop is destroyed, the longer stemmed and sturdier *bao* may at any rate survive. It is also sown on high land near the village site, again in conjunction with mustard. The soil is poor, but is manured with the sweepings of the courtyard and the cowshed.

*Ahu* is also occasionally transplanted, the system of cultivation employed being substantially the same as that in force for *sali*. It is sown about the middle of May, transplanted some six weeks later and reaped about the end of October. Transplanted *ahu* is generally grown on irrigated land, and is most commonly found in mauzas Bamuni, Kandali, Kathiatali and Kampur. The crop ripens earlier than *sali* and thus gives a quicker return on the labour expended in its production.

**Mustard.**

Mustard, as has already been said, is usually grown in conjunction with *ahu* on the riparian flats. The jungle is cut down in February and March, and if the land cannot be prepared in time for summer rice, is allowed to rot upon the ground. What remains is burned in October, the stumps dug out, and the land is ploughed over four or five times. The seed is sewn about the end of October and the plant is ready to be

pulled from the field about the middle of January. It is generally left to dry for a few days and is then tied in bundles, and carried to the homestead, where it is threshed out by the cattle.

Nearly one-third of the total mustard crop of the district is raised in the three mauzas of Mayang, Gerua Bokani, and Dhing, but the whole of the country lying between the Kalang and the Brahmaputra is a mustard growing tract. South and east of the Kalang, the area under this plant is inconsiderable.

**Pulses.** Pulse is usually grown on the alluvial flats that fringe the Brahmaputra in conjunction with summer rice and mustard, but a crop is often taken from the land on which rice seedlings, early rice, and sugarcane have been grown, as it is generally and rightly thought to improve the quality of the soil. In the *chaparis* if new land is taken up the first proceeding is to cut and burn the reeds and grass. Only two ploughings are required, and those are of the very lightest character, and, if the ground is naturally clear of jungle, the seed is sometimes simply sown on the river flats as soon as the floods subside. Pulse is also scattered broadcast amongst the rice stubble, or between the *sali* plants, if the land is still soft, but this method is not generally in use. The seed is sown in September and the crop is ripe about four months later. The plants are pulled up by the roots, left for a few days in the field to dry, and are then collected at the convenience of the cultivators. The seeds are threshed out by cattle, but as the grains do not separate readily from the pods, their

efforts are supplemented by a man armed with a bamboo staff. Several different kinds of pulse are grown but nine-tenths of the crop belong to the variety known as *mati-mah* (*phaseolus mungo radiatus*). Other kinds are *magu-mah* (*phaseolus mungo linn*), a species which has a smaller yield and requires more careful cultivation, but commands a higher price and possesses a more delicate flavour. It is seldom grown except on the river *chaparis*. *Kala-mah* (*lathyrus sativus*) is grown but not in any considerable quantities. It has a large yield but does not fetch a high price. Another variety is the lentil *masur-mah* (*lens esculenta*) which is also grown on *chapari* land.

Jute is grown in small patches as a garden crop. Fibres. The plants are cut in August and September, stripped of their leaves, tied in bundles and left to rot in pools of water for from seven to twelve days. When they are ready a handful of stems is taken up, broken in the middle, and beaten to and fro in the water, till the inner part drops out and only the fibre remains. The bundles of fibre are then dried and are ready for use. Small patches of rhea (*bœhmeria nivea*) are grown in the gardens of the fishing castes, where they are heavily manured. The skin is stripped off from the stem and the fibre separated from the outer covering. The thread obtained is exceptionally strong and durable but the difficulty of decortication has hitherto prevented the growth of rhea on a commercial scale.

Cotton is grown by the Mikirs in the hills and is of two varieties. The large bolled high growing cotton is

known as *bor kapah* (*gossypium neglectum*) while the smaller round bolled species is termed *horu kapah* (*gossypium herbaceum*). The former is sown on level ground, has a comparatively small number of seeds, can be ginned more easily than the second variety, can be plucked twice a year, and bears for three seasons.

The *horu kapah* on the other hand yields only one crop in the year. Cotton is generally grown on hill sides covered with young saplings, which are cut during the cold weather, allowed to dry on the ground, and burnt in March or April. The ground is then hoed up, and the seed sown broadcast, generally in conjunction with that of other crops such as rice, *til*, maize chillies, mustard, or melons. The field is weeded, once or twice, and the crop ripens in November. Cotton requires rain when it is put into the ground to enable the seed to germinate, but afterwards it thrives best if it gets a good deal of sun, and heavy rain is liable to rot the stems. The average yield is about 150 lbs. per acre, and the produce is generally sold unginned, as the cost of labour is heavy in Nowgong and there is little demand locally for the seed. Most of the cotton grown in the district is raised in the Mikir Hills where it is estimated that there are about 3,000 acres under this plant.

**Storage and threshing of grain.**

The grain is usually stored as it is brought from the field in an out-house called *bhoral*. When it is required for use the sheaves are untied and spread over the courtyard. Cattle are then driven round and round over the heap of grain and straw, till the ears have been

finally separated from the stalk.* The grain is next passed through a sieve, and placed in a flat bamboo tray called *kula*. It is then jerked into the air and allowed to fall back into the tray, or held aloft and allowed to fall slowly to the ground, till gradually the chaff is carried off. After threshing the paddy is stored in huge drums, called *duli* or *mar*. They are made of split bamboo, and the outer surface is plastered over with clay and cowdung.

**Agricultural implements.** **The plough**

The agricultural implements in use are of a very simple character. The plough is usually made of the jack fruit tree or some other hard wood, and consists of three parts—the handle and body which are usually all in one piece, the pole which joins the plough at the junction of the handle and the body, and the yoke which is merely a piece of wood, fastened by rope at right angles to the pole, with pegs affixed to it to keep it from sliding from the necks of the bullocks. The front portion of the body is sharpened to a point which is shod with iron, and in soft soil a piece of bamboo is sometimes substituted for the iron. This piece of iron is the only portion of the plough which the farmer has to purchase. The rest he makes for himself. The whole instrument is suited to the wretched class of animal required to draw it. It weighs as a rule about 20 lbs and, when cattle are used, the yoke seldom stands as much as 36 inches from the ground. When buffaloes are employed, the whole plough is constructed on a

* An experiment made by Mr. Darrah, D. L. R. and A. showed that nine bullocks took 2 hours and 8 minutes only to thresh out 7½ maunds of paddy.

larger scale. It is obvious that such an implement can only penetrate from three to four inches into the soil, but the wretched quality of the plough cattle prohibits the use of a more effective instrument.

**Other implements.** The harrow (*moi*) is generally a bamboo ladder, about eight feet in length, on which a man stands as it is drawn across the field. It is used to crush the clods turned up by the plough before mustard or summer rice is sown, and to reduce the fields required for wet rice to puddle. Its place is sometimes taken by a plain log of wood. It is prepared by the cultivator himself from the bamboos growing in his garden. Clods are broken by a mallet (*dheli mari*) which is also made at home. Hoes (*kodalis*) are used to trim the embankments (*alis*) which help to retain the water. The head is bought in the bazar, and costs from Re. 1 to Re. 1-4, and is fitted with a shaft by the farmer himself. Sickles, with which the rice is reaped, have also to be purchased and cost from two to four annas. In *ahu* cultivation, a large wooden rake (*bindha*) with teeth nearly one foot in length, is dragged over the crop by a bullock when the plants are about six inches high. The *nirani*, a kind of trowel with a long handle, is used for weeding *ahu* rice. The sugarcane mill is described in the paragraph dealing with the preparation of molasses. The ordinary implement used for husking grain is the *dheki*, a long beam with a pestle affixed at the end, which is supported by two posts at about two-thirds of the length from the head. The shorter end is depressed by the foot, and the pestle is thus raised into the air; the weight is then

removed, and the pestle falls into a small hole, in a piece of wood which has been sunk level with the ground, in which the grain is placed. The *dheki* is the implement ordinarily employed by the Assamese to husk their rice or pulse but the animistic tribes generally use a large wooden mortar (*ural*) and a pestle (*muri*). All of these implements are made at home.

Sugarcane (*saccharum officinarum*) is usually grown on high land near the village site, and as the soil is poor, it has to be well manured with cowdung. The crop is propagated from the tops of the best canes, which are cut off at harvest time and kept in a shady place. One of these tops yields on the average about five canes, and as they contain but little juice, the cultivator does not sacrifice much of the gross product of his fields in the cause of reproduction. Four principal varieties of the plant are recognised. The *bagi* or white stands about seven feet high and has yellow canes of a soft juicy texture. The *teli* is shorter, harder, and thinner, and the canes are of a deep red or even purple colour. The *Bangali*, a foreign variety, is larger and more juicy than the indigenous kinds, but yields a smaller proportion of sugar. The *malaha* is a hard and thin variety of the *mugi*, and, where grown, is planted round the edge of the field. The land is hoed up till it is reduced to a fine tilth, and the tops planted in trenches between April and June. The patch is fenced with split bamboo, and there is usually a stout hedge of arhar dal (*cajanus indicus*), but constant watching is required to scare away jackals and other animals,

**Sugarcane.**

and an empty oil tin with a clapper is generally to be seen suspended over each field. While the crop is growing it is continually hoed and weeded, and about August the leaves should be tied up round each cluster of canes, which is a troublesome proceeding. The earth from the ridges is heaped about the roots to strengthen their hold upon the soil, and this process is continued until the relative positions of ridge and trench are reversed, and the canes stand upon ridges with the trenches in between. Harvesting goes on from January to April, and during the winter nights and in the foggy mornings the drone of the sugarcane mill is heard coming across the fields in nearly every part of the Assam Valley where the "works of men" are to be seen.

**Preparation of molasses.** The native form of mill is still generally used for the extraction of the juice. It consists of two wooden rollers, fixed side by side in a trough hollowed out of a heavy block of wood. The tops of the two rollers pass through a hollow beam, supported by uprights let through the lower block of wood into the ground, and are cut into the form of screws which fit into one another. To the larger of the two (*mota bhim* as distinguished from *maiki bhim*) is affixed a pole, which is driven round in a circle, and thus causes the rollers to revolve. The motive power is usually supplied by the villagers themselves, but buffaloes are occasionally used for the work. The mill requires rather more knowledge of carpentry for its production than the other implements of agriculture, and can only be made by the more skillful of the villagers. The cane is placed between the

rollers and crushed as it is slowly forced through. Each handful is passed through the mill three or four times, till nothing but foam appears. The juice trickles from the trough into an earthen vessel, and is then transferred to a small boat scooped out of a log. When twelve or fifteen gallons have been collected, boiling begins. The furnace is hollowed out of the ground, and has four circular openings to receive the cauldrons, which are made of the most durable kinds of potters' clay. Two of these vessels are placed about 9 feet from the furnace's mouth, and only serve to heat the juice before it is transferred into the other vessels to be boiled. When the juice has been reduced to the proper condition, it is ladled into a wooden vessel (*gholani*) shaped like a small dug-out, and is stirred for half an hour. As the stirring continues, the liquid loses its dark brown colour, and assumes the consistency and hue of yellow mud. It is then stored in earthen pots and the process is complete.

**Causes affecting productiveness of land.**

The fertility of the rice fields mainly depends upon the following five causes: the water supply, the quality of the soil, and the liability to injury from flood, wild animals, or shade. But the first named factor is probably of most importance. The soil of the district varies from pure sand near the Brahmaputra to clay so stiff as to be utterly unfit for cultivation. The land best suited for the growth of rice is a clay loam *alatia*, the most fertile variety of which is called *bherbheria*, and is particularly deep and soft. *Bherbheria* land is found at the lowest part of the rice basins, and is enriched by the drainage

from the village site. The animals which do most injury to the crop are pigs, elephants, and monkeys. Elephants leave disastrous traces of their presence, but luckily do not remain long in any one locality, and are generally only found in the *chapari*, and in the Rangkhang, Duar Salana, Jorabahi, Garubat and Jamunamukh mauzas. Serious damage is sometimes done by insects which are called *keonkata*, *tupalia*, *gandhi* (*leptocorisa acuta*) and *chara* (*hispa acuesceus*). The *gandhi* is a small bug, which injures the rice plant by feeding on the stems and sucking all the sap from the young grains. It is most prevalent in July and August, and is particularly in evidence during a spell of hot dry weather. High wind and rain drive it back into the jungle, and good results are obtained by lighting fires of vegetable refuse to windward. The best remedy of all is to collect the insects by smearing a winnowing fan with some glutinous substance and pushing it over the ears of grain, when many of the bugs will be found adhering to the fan. This remedy should be tried in the morning or late afternoon, as the insects do not feed in the heat of the day. The *chara* is a tiny beetle, which eats away the outer surface of the leaves and stalks and thus affects the outturn of the crops. It attacks the young plants in the nursery and can most easily be destroyed there by spraying*. Smoking the fields also produces good results, but must be continued for some days or the beetles will return. Rain is wanted when *sali* rice

* The best solution is 1 lb. Paris Green, 1 lb freshly slaked lime or flour and 150 gallons water. The solution should be kept constantly stirred and should be sprayed on with a fine sprayer.

is sown and is transplanted but is not needed for the sowing of *ahu* and *bao*. Sir W. Hunter† reports that about 1822 there was a wholesale destruction of the harvest by locusts, and that the price of paddy rose to the enormous height of Rs. 8 per maund. Locusts re-appeared in 1840 and sent up the price to Rs. 3-5-0 per maund, and in 1858 the visitations of other insects as well as locusts sent paddy up to Rs. 2-10-0 a maund. The authority for these statements is not quoted, and at the present day, Nowgong does not appear to be in any way specially liable to blight. The troubled condition of the country in 1822 would in itself be sufficient to account for the high price of grain. During every stage of its growth the plant is benefitted by moderate showers, but rain is absolutely essential at the time when the ears are first appearing. Hail storms in December sometimes lay the crop and add materially to the cost of reaping, but fortunately are very local in their action.

**Garden crops. The plantain**

One of the most valuable of garden crops is the plantain (*musa sapientum*). As many as ten main varieties of this tree are recognized, but the most important are those known as *athia*, *monohar*, *cheni champa*, and *malbhog*. The first two groups are again subdivided into a considerable number of different species. The commonest form of *athia* is called *bhim*, a large tree which is found growing in the garden of nearly every house. The fruit is considered cool and wholesome, and is very generally used as food for infants. The *monohar* is a somewhat

† Statistical Account of Assam, Vol. I, P. 197.

smaller tree; the pulp of the fruit is white and slightly acid in taste, and is largely used in combination with soft rice and milk at village feasts. The *malbhog* and *cheni champa* are small trees, whose fruit is much appreciated by Europeans. The *athia* plantain is generally grown near the homestead where it can obtain a plentiful supply of manure; but the finer varieties are planted at a little distance to protect them from the earthworms, whose attacks they are hardly strong enough to resist. Sandy soil and heavy clay check the growth of the plant, and anything in the shape of waterlogging is most injurious. The trees are planted in holes about a foot wide and eighteen inches deep and are manured with cowdung, ashes and sweepings. Young saplings take from eighteen months to two years to flower, and the flowers take from three to six months to turn into fruit. The plantain tree plays many parts in addition to that of fruit purveyor. The flower is much esteemed as a vegetable, the leaves serve as plates, and the trunks are used for decorative purposes on occasions of ceremony, and as food for elephants. An alkaline solution, distilled from the sheaths and the corm, is often used in place of salt. These portions of the tree are sliced, dried, and reduced to ashes. The ashes are placed in an earthen pot, in which there are several holes lightly plugged with straw. Water is then poured over them, which dissolves the alkali and trickles through the holes into the receiver below. The resulting product, which is known as *kharpani*, is used as a relish, as a hair wash, and as a mordant with certain dyes.

Other garden crops.

The betel nut (*areca catechu*) is grown almost as universally as the plantain, and, with the bamboo, forms the great trinity of trees in which the houses of the Assamese are usually embedded. The plantation is hoed up, and kept clear of weeds, and the trees are most liberally manured with cowdung. The pan vine (*piper betle*) is frequently trained up their stems, and the leaf and nut, which are invariably eaten in conjunction, are thus grown side by side. Tobacco is a plant which is to be seen growing in the majority of gardens. The seedlings are raised in carefully manured beds in August and September. At the beginning of November they are transplanted into ground which has been reduced to a fine tilth, watered for a few days, and protected from the sun by little sections of the plantain trunk. The bed is lightly hoed up two or three times and not more than ten or twelve leaves are allowed to grow on each plant, the remainder being picked off as they appear. The leaves are first gathered in February and March, and there is a second, but much inferior crop about two months later. If required for chewing, they are either dried under a shed, or else pressed into a hollow bamboo (*chunga*) and allowed to ferment. When the tobacco is destined for the pipe, though this is not the use to which it is generally put, the leaves are piled up in heaps till they ferment, cut up and mixed with molasses, and then are ready for the hookah. The commonest forms of vegetable grown are, spinach *pui* (*basella alba*), *lahi*, a species of *brassica*, different kinds of arums (*kachu*), different kinds of yams (*dioscorea*) and gourds, the country bean *urahi* (*dolichos*

*lablab*), the common mallow *lafa* (*malva verticillata*), the radish *mula* (*raphanus sativus*), the sorrel *chuka say* (*rumex vesicarius*) and the brinjal (*solanum melongena*).

**Yield and value of crops.**

The outturn of different crops varies according to the character of the season, and also to a great extent according to the character and level of the soil on which they are grown.

The statement in the margin shows the normal yield per acre laid down by the Agricultural Department after a long series of experiments. These figures only represent a general mean and even in a normal year, there are many fields whose outturn varies largely from the average. The yield of rice, it may be premised, is expressed in terms of husked grain. Like the outturn, the cash value of the crop can only be approximately ascertained. The prices obtained by the raiyats vary to some extent in different parts of the district, but probably average about Rs. 1-4 to 1-8 per maund of unhusked grain. Assuming that unhusked paddy yields 62 per cent. of clean rice, it would appear that the value of the harvest from an acre of *sali* is between 25 and 30 rupees, from one of *bao* between Rs. 17 and Rs. 21, and from one of *ahu* between Rs. 20 and Rs. 24. For mustard the villagers generally get from Rs. 2-8 to Rs. 3 a maund, so that the yield from one acre is worth from 17 to 20 rupees. The price of molasses varies considerably from time to time and from place to place and ranges from Rs. 5 to Rs. 7-8-0 per maund.

| | | lbs. |
|---|---|---|
| Sali | ... | 1,000 |
| Ahu | ... | 800 |
| Bao | ... | 700 |
| Mustard | ... | 550 |
| Molasses | ... | 1,800 |

The value of the yield of an acre of cane ranges accordingly from Rs. 110 to Rs. 165.

In many parts of Nowgong floods are a serious obstacle to agriculture. The mauzas near the Brahmaputra are inundated in the rains, but this is merely one of the ordinary incidents of life, and the villagers overcome this difficulty by growing summer rice, which, if they are lucky, will be reaped before the floods are at their highest, and mustard which is sown after the waters fall. Further south the Kalang often overflows its banks after heavy rain and does some damage, while the Kapili and its tributaries are especially troublesome as they are liable to come down in strong and sudden freshets from the hills. It would be a difficult matter to regulate these rivers by protective works, and the population of the district is so sparse that no attempt has yet been made to reclaim any of the inundated tracts for permanent cultivation. The remains of embankments constructed in the days of native rule, are to be found in the Barbhagia and Juria mauzas and the Dhing road is said to afford some protection to the land lying on the west, but the time is not yet ripe for the construction of embankments on an extensive scale. **Floods.**

There are no great irrigation works in Nowgong, or for the matter of that in any other part of the Province, and no attempt is made to water the crops from wells, but near the hills the people grow rice on high land above the reach of flood and bring the water of the hill streams through little channels on to their fields. These channels are constructed and **Irrigation and attempts to improve the system of cultivation.**

repaired by the villagers themselves, and are to be seen in the Kandali, Kathiatali, Duar Bagari, Bhatialgaon, Barbhagia, Bhelenguri, Chalchali, Namati, Jamunamukh, Rangkhang, Sahari, Uttarkhola, and Garubat mauzas. But they are not very numerous or very elaborate feats of engineering, and over the greater part of the district the aim of the cultivator is rather to protect his fields from flood than to attract the water to them. Manure is very seldom used, except for sugarcane and vegetables for which cowdung and sweepings are employed, but land covered with jungle is of course fertilized by the ashes of the reeds standing on it. Little attempt has been made to introduce new crops, or to improve the existing staples except in so far as this is done by reserving the largest ears to act as seed, but in Kampur the cultivation of peas, wheat, and jute is said to be extending in the neighbourhood of the railway.

**Live stock. Buffaloes.** The buffaloes of the district belong to two distinct breeds, the Assamese and the Bengali.* The Assamese are the larger of the two and are fine upstanding animals with widely spreading horns. During the cold weather, they are generally grazed in jungly tracts and a wild bull often attaches himself to the herd, and becomes the sire of many of the calves. This continual infusion of a good strain of blood does much to maintain the excellence of the breed. The Bengali buffalo is a smaller and less imposing animal, and does not command so high a price, a bull

* The information given in these paragraphs is taken from a note compiled by Mr Darrah, Director of Land Records and Agriculture in 1887 and from reports received from the tahsildars and mauzadars in Nowgong.

costing from Rs. 25 to Rs. 30 and a cow from Rs. 30 to Rs. 40. The price of the Assamese buffalo varies considerably in different portions of the district. Near the Brahmaputra, where large herds of these animals are kept by professional graziers, the bull fetches from Rs. 30 to Rs. 40, the cow from Rs. 40 to Rs. 60, but in the Kapili valley the price rises to Rs. 40 to Rs. 60 for a bull and to Rs. 60 to 85 for a cow. Buffaloes rarely get anything but grass and a little salt to eat. In the cultivated portions of the district they are usually placed in charge of a small half naked boy whose legs can hardly stretch across the massive back of the animal he bestrides, and who guides it with a nose-rope. In the *chaparis* the herd is driven out to graze in the jungle, and follows the lead of the older cows, whose whereabouts is indicated by the metal or wooden bells that are dangling from their necks. They are often trusted to return in the evening of their own accord, and a long line of animals is sometimes to be seen swimming across a channel of the Brahmaputra, which separates them from the huts in which the graziers live. Often too, as the sun is setting, a herdsman is to be seen climbing a *simul* tree, which raises its head above the surrounding wastes of grass, to call his buffaloes home. At night each animal is fastened by a nose-rope to a post, and sleeps on the bare ground. A cow generally remains in milk for about ten months, and yields at the beginning from two to four seers every day. The amount gradually decreases till a month or so before the next calf comes when it ceases altogether.

The milk is very white and rich in fatty materials, and consequently yields a large proportion of *ghi*. The cows are said to begin breeding when three years old, and to continue doing so for fifteen years; during which time they give birth, on the average, to about ten calves. The normal life of a buffalo is from 25 to 30 years.

Cattle. Half starved, undersized, ill-bred, and not unfrequently diseased, the Assamese cattle are but sorry creatures. The bullocks find it a difficult task to drag even the light native plough, and the cows yield but a minimum of milk. The causes of this degeneracy are not entirely clear, but are probably to be found in a total indifference to laws of breeding, in absolute neglect, and partly perhaps in the want of suitable fodder in the rains. No bulls are set aside to be the sires of the herd, and the cows are generally covered by a young and immature animal, who secures the object of his desires by his superior lightness and agility. The sire is often closely related to the dam and she, in her turn, has had her strength exhausted by being covered, when herself little more than a calf, and by subsequent breeding without the smallest intermission. The cattle are never groomed, and, when an epidemic breaks out no attempt is made to isolate the sick. "Everything," as Mr. Darrah says, "is left to nature, from the moment when the most active, and therefore probably the youngest bull of the herd has succeeded in covering a cow, until the progeny, after years of work and semi-starvation, dies neglected in some unfrequented jungle." If nasty, they have, at any rate, the merit

of being cheap and cows cost from Rs. 7 to Rs. 12, and bullocks, which are usually castrated when three years old, from Rs. 15 to Rs. 30.

In the cold weather there is generally plenty of grazing ground, and the animals are turned loose in the rice fields, or are driven away to swamps which are often covered with the most luxuriant grass. In the rains, when most of the country goes under water, fodder is not so easily obtained, and the cattle have to pick up a living as best they can on the high ground between the rice fields, and are stall fed on grass, and, in the more densely populated portions of the district, on straw. The difficulty becomes particularly acute in the *chapari mahals*, and in Gerua mauza they are said to be kept on artificial mounds of earth, which are thrown up near the homestead. On the other hand in the cold weather there is abundance of excellent grazing on the *chapari*, and in the six mauzas that fringe the Brahmaputra from Pubtharia to Mayang there were in 1903 no less than 42 separate *mokhutis*, or herds of buffaloes kept by professional graziers, the great majority of whom are Nepalese. Graziers are also fairly numerous in the tahsils, and there were 14 *mokhutis* both in the Raha and the *sadr* tahsil, and 9 in Samaguri. On the other hand in the Kapili valley, above its junction with the Jamuna, the professional grazier is unknown. This no doubt is due to the fact that the population is so sparse that there could be but little sale for milk, as in this portion of the district there is an abundance of good grazing ground, and the

**Grazing grounds.**

cattle of the Kapili valley are said to be some of the finest in Assam.

**Goats and sheep and ponies.**

The goats are almost as degenerate as the cattle. They yield but little milk, the whole of which is taken by the kids, and are only kept for food or sacrifice. At night they are usually shut up in a small out-house with a raised floor, which is approached by a slanting board or sloping bamboo platform. There is no indigenous breed of sheep, and the animals imported do not thrive. The total number in the district is extremely small. The country ponies are, if anything, even more miserable specimens than the cattle. Few of them are as much as twelve hands in height, and they possess neither pace, endurance nor stamina. A census of the live stock in the district was taken in 1904, and disclosed the following results. Bull buffaloes 8,100 ; cow buffaloes 8,200; bulls and bullocks 69,900; cows 56,000 ; young stock 72,200; goats 31,000 ; sheep 213 ; horses and ponies 516. A fine breed of black swine are also kept by the animistic tribes.

**Cattle disease.**

The most common forms of cattle disease prevalent in Nowgong are foot and mouth disease, rinderpest (*guti*), a disease called *kachua*, the principal symptoms of which are flatulence and diarrhœa (*marki*), cholera, *matikhoa* the first symptom of which is, as the name implies, the eating of earth followed by dysentery, and *sukuna* when the animal refuses to eat and dies after ten days or a fortnight.

**Tea: commencement of the industry.***

The indigenous tea of Assam was first brought to the notice of Government in 1826 by Mr. C. A. Bruce, a gentleman who had traded in the Province in the time of the Ahom Rajas, and who had been sent up the Brahmaputra in command of a division of gun boats in 1824. In 1834 a committee was appointed by Government to enquire into the possibility of cultivating tea on a commercial scale, who deputed three of their members—Drs. Wallich, McClelland, and Griffiths to visit Upper Assam. Nurseries were opened for the plant, a small establishment was entertained, under the general management of Mr. Bruce, to search the jungles for plots of indigenous tea and cultivate them when discoverd, and plants and seed were brought to Assam from China. Tea makers and trained Chinese were imported in 1837, and, in the following year, some of the manufactured product was sent to England, where it met with a most favourable reception. Assam tea was regarded as a curiosity, and the first eight chests which were put up to auction fetched sums which, at the present day, seem little short of fabulous, the prices paid ranging from 16 *s.* to £1-14-0 a pound. These were, however, only fancy prices, and a short time afterwards a merchant offered to purchase tea in considerable quantities at prices ranging from 1*s.* 10½*d.*, to 2*s.* a lb.

* Information with regard to the early history of the tea industry has been derived from

1. Selections from the Records of the Government of Bengal. No. XXXVII. Papers relating to Tea Cultivation in Assam. Calcutta, 1861.
2. Report of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the state and prospects of Tea cultivation in Assam, Cachar and Sylhet. Calcutta, 1868.
3. Papers regarding the Tea Industry in Bengal. Calcutta, 1873.

Tea in Nowgong.

Nowgong was, however, one of the last districts of the Assam Valley to attract the attention of the planter. In 1859, no tea was manufactured west of the Mikir Hills, and even the area planted out was not recorded. In 1872, the total area under mature plant was said to be 1,278 acres which yielded 363,000 lbs. of manufactured tea. Then ensued a period of some expansion and by 1882 the total area under plant both mature and immature had risen to 9,945 acres and the yield to 3,253,000 lbs. of manufactured tea. But the district continued to be unpopular in planting circles. During the last twenty years of the nineteenth century the tea industry in Tezpur, Sibsagar, and Lakhimpur advanced by leaps and bounds, but in Nowgong it made little progress. In 1900, there were only 12,673 acres under plant which yielded 4,330,000 lbs. of the manufactured article or a little more than one-seventh of the total outturn of the Sibsagar district. Statistics for later years will be found in Table VI. Most of the gardens are situated near the western slopes of the Mikir Hills, stretching from a point east of Nowgong town towards the Brahmaputra. Details for each garden will be found in statement A in the Appendix.

Labour force.

The industry is for the most part worked with imported labour, and in the ten years ending with 1890, 18,837 coolies were brought up to the plantations. The importations in the next decade were 25,610 the largest number (5,320) arriving in 1897, when famine was raging in the recruiting districts. Details for later years will be found in Table VI.

The abstract in the margin shows the areas from which the labour force in 1901 had been recruited. Assam itself is largely represented but a considerable proportion of those born in Assam are the children of immigrant coolies.

| | Number | Percentage. |
|---|---|---|
| Total ... | 20,263 | |
| Assam .. | 5,320 | 26 |
| Chota Nagpur | 5,878 | 29 |
| Other parts of Bengal ... | 2,332 | 12 |
| United Provinces ... | 271 | 1 |
| Central Provinces ... | 5,662 | 28 |

The journey from the recruiting districts is troublesome and expensive, the class of persons capable of working successfully in the damp climate of Assam is limited, and of recent years the supply of labour available has not been sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the planters. Special Acts have been passed to regulate the relations between the employers and their labour force. Careful provision is made for the welfare of the coolie. He is housed in neat and comfortable lines, usually far superior to the dwellings occupied by persons of that class outside the gardens, he is provided with an excellent water supply, generally drawn from masonry wells, and when sick he is cared for in a comfortable hospital by a native doctor working under the supervision of a European medical man. The provision of all these comforts and the importation of the labourers themselves cost large sums of money, which no one would be willing to expend without some guarantee that the coolies, when imported, would consent to remain on the plantation. This protection is afforded by the law, (Act VI of 1901) which lays down that a labourer, provided that he is

well-treated, must not leave the garden to which he is indentured before the expiry of his contract, unless he chooses to redeem it by a money payment.

**Soil.**

A friable red loam is the soil that proves most suitable for tea. The plant requires a heavy rainfall, but anything in the shape of water-logging is most prejudicial to its growth, and gardens should only be planted out on land which can be well drained. Land which, in its natural state, is covered with tree forest is usually considered the most suitable, as the absence of timber generally shows, either that the place is liable to flood, or that the soil is sandy, or that the rainfall is deficient.

**Varieties of plant.**

Four distinct varieties of wild tea are recognised: Assam indigenous, which has a leaf from 6 to $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length by $2\frac{3}{8}$ to $2\frac{7}{8}$ inches in width; the Manipur or Burma indigenous with a larger, darker, and coarser leaf than the preceding variety; Lushai or Cachar indigenous, whose mature leaf is from 12 to 14 inches long, and from 6 to $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide; and the Naga indigenous which has a long and narrow leaf. In addition to these four varieties there is the China plant, and different kinds of hybrids. The China tea is a squat and bushy shrub with small leaves, which gives a lower yield per acre than the other kinds. It is many years since China seed was planted out in new clearances, and considerable areas covered by this plant have been abandoned. In its natural state the indigenous plant attains to the dimensions of a tree, varying from 20 to 50 feet in height, though its girth seldom

exceeds two feet. It has a vigorous growth and yields a large outturn of fine flavoured tea, but is delicate when young. Of the hybrid variety there are many qualities ranging from nearly pure indigenous to nearly pure China. A plant with a very small admixture of China is usually preferred, as this imparts the hardiness, the want of which is the one defect in the indigenous variety.

**System of cultivation.**

The seed is planted in nursery beds in December and January and kept under shade till the young plants are three or four inches above the ground. Transplanting goes on between April and July, whenever there is rain, the plants being usually placed from four to five feet apart. During the first two years of their life little more is required than to keep the plantation cleared of weeds. By this time the plants are from two to four feet high, and at the end of the rains, they are pruned down to fifteen inches or a foot to encourage lateral growth. In the third year the plant can be lightly plucked over, but the yield of leaf is small. Pruning is continued every year, only about two inches are left of the wood formed since the previous pruning, and any unhealthy or stunted branches removed. As an extreme remedy old plants, in which there is a large proportion of gnarled and twisted wood, are sawn off level with the ground, and fresh shoots are allowed to spring from the root itself. During the rains the garden is hoed over several times, in order to render the soil permeable both to rain water and the roots of the bush. At the end of the rains the ground is

hoed up to the depth of 8 or 9 inches. The object of this is to protect the land from drought, the hoed-up soil prevents the evaporation of water from the lower strata. It also adds to the fertility of the land by exposing it to air, light, and changes of temperature. Manure has hitherto been little used. Oil cake and cowdung are occasionally spread about the plants, and exhausted land is sometimes top dressed with rich soil from a neighbouring marsh. The cost of these operations is considerable, and they are not invariably successful from the pecuniary point of view.

Plucking begins in April, and is continued till the beginning of December. The bud and the two top leaves are taken from each shoot, but fresh leaves soon appear, and in about five weeks time the shoot is ready to be plucked again. This throwing out of new leaves is termed a "flush," and there are usually five or six full "flushes" in a season, though each bush is picked over every ten days or so, as the twigs develop at different times. The plucking is usually done by women and children, while the men are engaged in hoeing up the ground around the plants. The plant is liable to be attacked by a large number of pests, the best known being the tea mosquito or blight, the green fly, and the red spider. A full account of these pests will be found in "The pests and blights of the tea plant" by Watt and Mann, Calcutta, 1903.

**System of manufacture**

When the leaf has been taken to the factory, it is spread out in thin layers on trays and allowed to wither. In fine weather the process takes about twenty hours,

but if it is cold and wet from thirty to forty hours may elapse before the leaf is ready. When the leaf has been properly withered it is placed in the rolling machines. The object of rolling is to break up the cellular matter and liberate the juices, and to give a twist to the leaf. Rolling takes about forty minutes, and after this the leaf is placed in a cool room for about three and a half hours to ferment. It is then placed on trays in the firing machines, through which hot air is driven, until the last trace of moisture has been expelled, and the tea is crisp to the touch. The leaf is then passed through sieves of varying degrees of fineness, and the tea sorted into different grades. The best and most expensive quality is called broken orange pekoe, and is made from the bud or tip, which contains all the good qualities of tea in a more concentrated form than any of the other leaves, is stronger, and has a more delicate flavour. The other grades, which are differentiated by the size of the mesh through which they pass are, orange pekoe, broken pekoe, pekoe, souchong and fannings. After the tea has been sorted it is fired once more to remove any moisture it may have absorbed from the surrounding atmosphere and is packed in lead lined boxes while it is still warm. Tea loses largely in weight during the process of manufacture, and about four pounds of green leaf are required to produce one pound of the finished article.

**Outturn and prices.** The character of the outturn depends largely upon the season, but still more upon the garden and the

system of manufacture followed. In 1868 the Commissioners estimated that the average outturn was about 240 lbs. per acre; but this estimate was probably too low, as the average yield in Nowgong during the five years ending with 1903 was 350 lbs. per acre. The introduction of machinery, and the improvement of the general system of cultivation and management, have rendered it possible to effect a large reduction, in the cost of the tea when placed upon the market. In 1868 it was calculated that tea must be sold at two shillings a lb. to yield a profit. Twenty years later the average price obtained by tea from the Brahmaputra Valley was 8 annas 2 pies, and, though in 1894 it rose to 10 annas 5 pies, in 1898 it dropped to 6 annas 9 pies, and has since remained below that figure.

Forests.

The forests of Nowgong fall into two main classes, the reserved forests, which in 1902-03 covered an area of 142 square miles, and the unclassed state forests, which in the same year occupied the enormous area of 3418 square miles. Unclassed state forest is however, simply Government waste land, and does not necessarily possess any of the characteristics which are usually associated with the expression forest. It may be a sandy *chur*, or a huge expanse of low-lying land covered with high grass and reeds and almost totally destitute of trees. It may be a small piece of arable land, which has been resigned by its former holder, and has not yet been settled with any other

person; or it may be, what its name would naturally suggest, *i.e.*, actual tree forest. It is impossible to give even the roughest estimate of the proportion of unclassed state forest, which is actually under timber, but where the total area is so enormous it is obvious that, in a country with a heavy rainfall like Assam, the area covered with trees must be considerable.

The management of the Government reserves is usually entrusted to an extra Assistant Conservator of Forests, who has a sanctioned staff of two deputy rangers, one forester, and twenty-one head guards, and guards. Settlement holders are allowed to take from unclassed state forests, any forest produce required for home consumption other than live reserved trees, free of royalty. **System of management**

Sonaru (*cassia fistula*), ajhar (*lagerstrœmia reginæ*) titasapa (*michelia champaca*), gunserai (*cinnamomum glanduliferum*) and gomari (*gmelina arborea*) are the most valuable trees found in unclassed state forests, the first four being used for the construction of dug-out canoes which are floated down the Kapili, Jamuna, and Barpani to Chaparmukh where they are purchased by traders from Goalpara and Gauhati.

From Table VIII it will be seen that the bulk of the timber sold in Nowgong is obtained from unclassed state forests, and that the reserves are hardly touched. The Diju valley forest, which lies a few miles south-east of Kaliabar, is in fact, the only one from which any appreciable revenue is at present raised, and the remaining 134 square miles of reserved forest

only yielded a revenue of Rs. 883 in 1903. These forests are too remote to attract the Bengal trader, but now that the railway has been completed through the North Cachar Hills, it is possible that purchasers may come from the Surma Valley, where there is a brisk demand for timber. In addition to the trees already mentioned they contain sal (*shorea robusta*), sam (*arto-carpus chaplasha*) poma (*cedrela toona*) nahor (*mesua ferrea* and koroi (*albizzia procera*). Details for each reserve will be found in Table VII. Minor articles of forest produce from which revenue is raised are bamboos, canes, rubber, lac, and agar (*aquilaria agallocha*), but the most important item of all are the fees levied on the professional graziers who herd their buffaloes in the jungles.

The expenditure incurred on forests in Nowgong is certainly not high, but as will be seen in Table VIII, it not unfrequently exceeds the revenue obtained.

## CHAPTER V.

# INDUSTRIES.

Industries—Silk—Weaving—Pottery—Brass and bell-metal—Lac—Mat-making—Fishing.

Apart from tea and the production of silk thread and lac, there are no industries of much commercial importance in Nowgong. In almost every house there is a loom, but the cotton cloth produced is generally required for home consumption, and is very seldom sold. A few up-country men express oil from mustard seed, using for the purpose the ordinary bullock mill of Upper India; and Bengalis, Mikirs and Kamars make daos, sickles and knives from imported iron. In the following paragraphs some account is given of such industries as exist. **Industries.**

Three different kinds of silk are produced in the district. The most valuable kind is known as *pat*, and is obtained from the cocoon of two species of worms, the univoltine or *bar polu* (*bombyx textor*) and the multivoltine or *saru polu* (*bombyx cræsi*). Both kinds are reared indoors on the leaves of the mulberry tree (*morus indica*), or where mulberry is not obtainable, on the *panchapa*. The eggs of the *bar polu* take ten months to hatch, the worms usually making their appearance about the **Pat silk.**

beginning of January. The life of the worm lasts from thirty to forty days, and the cocoon takes about six days to spin. The cocoons are of a bright yellow colour, but the silk, when boiled in potash water, become perfectly white. From twelve to fifteen thousand cocoons are required to yield one pound of thread, which is worth from Rs 8 to Rs. 12. The thread obtained from the *saru polu* is not so valuable as that of the *bombyx textor*, but as the worm yields four broods in the year, it finds greater favour with the cultivators. *Pat* silk is, however, only made to order and the total quantity produced is very small.

Several causes combine to make this silk rare and expensive. The Jugis are the only caste who will consent to rear the worm, and, as the insect is looked upon as impure, the industry is probably regarded with disfavour even by the Jugis. The supply of mulberry leaf is limited, and the worms are very delicate, a large number of them dying before they spin.

**Muga.** The *muga* worm (*antheræa assamæa*) is generally fed on the *sum* tree (*machilus odoratissima*). Five different broods are distinguished by vernacular names, but in the Nowgong district the only broods commonly reared are the *katia* in October—November, the *jarua* in December—February, and the *jethua* in the spring. The complete cycle of the insect lasts from 54 to 81 days, the bulk of which is occupied by the life of the worm. When the moths hatch out the females are at once attached to straws which are hung up inside the house, and are visited by the males who are allowed to

remain at liberty. Each female produces about 250 eggs, which are placed in a dark place, and when the worms appear, they are at once transferred to the *sum* tree. A band of straw or plantain leaves is fastened round the trunk to prevent them from descending, and during the night they take shelter under the leaves. Constant vigilance is, however, required to keep off crows, kites, owls, large bats and other pests which prey upon the worm, and hail and heavy rain not unfrequently do damage. When fully grown the worm is about 5 inches long and nearly as thick as the forefinger. In colour it is green with a brown and yellow stripe extending down each side, while red moles with bright gold bases are dotted about the surface of the body. When the worms are ready to spin they descend the tree and are then removed to the house. Most Assamese women possess one or more garments of *muga* silk, and well-to-do men wear waist cloths of this material on occasions of ceremony. *Muga* silk is chiefly manufactured for home use and very little is produced for sale. The principal centres of cultivation are at Barghat, Panigaon, Nanai, Jhagari, and Baropujia. The silk is reeled from the cocoon, 250 of which yield one ounce of thread. The price obtained is from 6 to 8 annas per ounce.

The *eri* worm (*attacus ricini*) derives its name from the *eri* or castor oil plant (*ricinus communis*) on which it is usually fed. From five to six broods are usually reared in the year, those which spin their cocoons in November, February, and May yielding most silk. As **Eri silk.**

with the *muga* moth, the females, when they emerge, are tied to pieces of reed, and are visited by the males who are left at liberty. The eggs are hatched in the house and take from a week to 15 days to mature. As soon as the worms appear they are placed on a tray, which is suspended in a place of safety, and fed on the leaves of the castor oil plant. When fully grown they are about 3½ inches long and of a dirty white or green colour. After the final moulting, the worms are transferred from the tray to forked twigs suspended across a piece of reed, and, when they are ready to spin, are placed on a bundle of dried plantain leaves or withered branches which is hung from the roof of the hut. The matrix of the cocoon is very gummy, and the silk, which is of a dirty white colour, has to be spun not reeled off. Before this is done the cocoons are softened by boiling them in water and a solution of alkali. Empty cocoons yield about three quarters of their weight in thread.

The *Eri* worm is regarded as impure by the higher castes and its cultivation is restricted to Lalungs, Kacharis, Nadiyals, Haris, Namasudras or Charals, and other low caste people. The places in which the thread is produced in the largest quantities are the Baropujia, Mikirbheta, Dhing, Kandali, and Kathiatali mauzas; the best markets for *eri* cloth are the ones at Jaluguti, Phulaguri, Gobha, and Barpani.

**Cost of silk cloths.** The most useful garment made of *eri* silk is the *bar kapor*, a large sheet sometimes as much as 20 feet in length by 5 feet wide, which is folded and used as a wrap in the cold weather. It costs from Rs. 10 to

Rs. 16. *Eri* cloth is also made into coats and petticoats. Women's clothes, both petticoats and the shawls worn over the bust, are, however, usually made of *muga* silk, the thread required for a complete dress costing from Rs. 5 to Rs. 7. The instruments used for twisting and weaving silk are the same as those employed for cotton, but for *eri* thread a stronger reed is employed.

**Weaving.**

The weaving of cotton cloths is carried on by rich and poor alike, and one or more looms are to be seen in the courtyard of almost every house. Though cotton is grown in the hills, and though many different dyes are to be found growing in the forests, imported yarn, which is supplied in the requisite shades by the village shop-keeper, is usually employed. The loom consists of four stout posts which are driven into the ground so as to make a rectangle about 5′ 10″ × 2′ 6″, and are joined together at the top by cross beams. The implements required for the conversion of raw cotton into cloth, and the system of manufacture followed are described in the minutest detail in a "Monograph on the Cotton Fabrics of Assam," published by the Superintendent of Government Printing at Calcutta in 1897. Descriptions of mechanical processes of this nature are, however, at their best unsatisfactory, and are hardly intelligible without a series of diagrams. The total cost of the whole apparatus is from ten to fifteen rupees, and as weaving only occupies the leisure moments of the women, the use of home-made clothing helps to save the pocket of the villager. Very litte cotton cloth is prepared for sale, and there can be little doubt that,

weaving as an industry is commercially a failure, the price obtained for the finished article being out of all proportion to the time expended on its production. The principal articles made are *gamchas* or napkins, often worn on the head, large sheets or shawls worn as wraps, called *chadar khania* or *bar kapor*, and smaller shawls called *chelengs*. A kind of shawl called *pariaia kapor* is very finely made and is enriched with a beautifully embroidered border. It costs sometimes as much as Rs. 200.

Pottery. The pottery produced is of a very rough and simple character, and most of the potters combine this occupation with agriculture. The earth used is generally a glutinous clay, which is well moistened with water and freed from all extraneous substances. If it is too stiff, some clean coarse sand is worked up with it. A well kneaded lump of clay is then placed on the wheel, which is fixed horizontally and made to rotate rapidly. As the wheel revolves, the potter works the clay with his fingers and gives it the desired shape. The vessel is then sun dried, placed in a mould, and beaten into final shape with a mallet, a smooth stone being held the while against the inner surface. It is then again sun dried, the surface is polished, and it is ready for the kiln. The collection of the clay and firewood, the shaping of the utensils on the wheel, and the stacking of them in the kiln, form the men's portion of the work. The women do the polishing and the final shaping. The Hiras, however, do not use the wheel, but mould the vessel on a board, laying on the clay in strips, and the whole of this work is entrusted to the women.

The instruments employed are—the wheel (*chak*) which is about three feet in diameter and rotates on a piece of hard pointed wood fixed firmly in the ground, the mould (*athali*), a hollow basin about 16 inches long by 3½ inches deep, the mallet (*baliya piteni*), and the polisher (*chaki*).

The principal articles manufactured are cooking pots, water jars, vessels in which rice is boiled (*thali*), and larger vessels (*hari* and *jaka*) with lamps, pipes, and drums. The profits of the business are said to be small, and the local pottery is being gradually ousted by a superior quality of goods imported from Bengal, and by metal utensils which are coming extensively into use. The principal centres of the industry are at the following villages :—Charalgao and Kumargao in Khatoalgao mauza, Kumargao in Kachamari mauza, Potani, Dharamtul, and Nanai Kumar.

**Brass and bell metal.**

The brass and metal industry is not of much importance. Bell-metal utensils are cast in moulds, but brass vessels are made out of thin sheets of that metal which are beaten out and pieced together. The implements of the trade consist of anvils of different sizes (*belmuri chatuli*), hammers, pincers, and chisels. The furnace is simply a hollow in the floor of the hut, and the bellows are made of goat's skin. When it is desired to join two sheets of brass together, nicks are cut in one edge, into which the other edge is fitted, and the two are then beaten flat. A rough paste made of borax and *pan*, a substance which consists of three parts of sheet brass with one part of solder, is then smeared over

the join. The metal is heated, the *pan* melts, and the union is complete. The principal articles manufactured are small flattish bowls, often used as drinking cups (*lota, bati*), jars for holding water (*kalsi, gagari*), trays (*sarai*), boxes to carry betel-nut and lime (*tema, temi*), and large vessels used for boiling rice (*thali*). The chief centres of the industry are at Kuwarital, Raha, Jagial, Samaguri, Moriagao in Barbhagia mauza, Sutargao in Khatoalgao mauza, and at Kahargao in the Raha tahsil, but the number of these artizans is very small.

Lac. The lac industry is almost entirely in the hands of the Hill Mikirs and Hill Lalungs, and most of the stick lac produced comes from mauza Rangkhang, and to a certain extent, from Duar Amla. The insect is reared on various members of the ficus family, and on arhar (*cajanus indicus*), but as far as is known, the quality of the product is not affected by the tree on which it has been fed. The method of propagation is as follows. Pieces of stick lac containing living insects are placed in baskets and tied on to the twigs of the tree on which the next crop is to be grown. After a few days, the insects crawl on to the young branches and begin to feed and secrete the resin. They are left undisturbed for about six months, and the twigs encrusted with the secretion are then picked off. A good sized tree yields from 30 seers to 2 maunds of stick lac, the best results being obtained from trees of moderate growth, which do not contain too rich a supply of sap. Two crops are generally obtained in the year, the first being collected in

May and June, the second in October and November. The first crop is largely used for seed, and it is the second which supplies the bulk of the exported lac. Ants and the caterpillars of a small moth sometimes do much damage to the insect, and a heavy storm at the time when they are spreading over the tree will destroy them altogether. Almost all the lac produced is exported in the crude form of stick lac, but the hill tribes occasionally extract the dye which they require for their own use, by placing the lac in a wooden mortar, pouring boiling water over it, and pressing it with a pestle.

The Nowgong mats are of three kinds *kath*, *dhari*, and *pati*. The *kath* mats are woven in a wooden frame and the industry is not confined to any special caste. The better kinds, which are made from the *kuhila* plant *(aeschynomene aspera)* fetch from four annas to ten rupees according to size. A cheaper variety made from *murtha (marantha dichotoma)*, and *hogal*, *(typha angustifolia)* only cost from two annas to a rupee. The following villages are noted for the manufacture of these mats, Bardoa, Baropujia, Dighaldari, Kaliabar, Kathiatali, and Morakalang. The *dhari* mats are made from strips of bamboo by Mikirs, Lalungs, and Kacharis in the hill mauzas. The price varies from two annas to two rupees according to size. The manufacture of *pati* mats is almost entirely restricted to the Patias, a section of the Kewat caste. They are made from *patidoi* (*clinogyne dichotoma*) but are not so neatly finished off as the *sitalpati* mats of Sylhet **Mat-making**

and Bengal, and cost from four annas to five rupees. The principle centres of the industry are Nowgong, Baropujia, Raha, and Kathiatali.

Jhapi.

The *jhapi* is the national hat of the Assamese and is made in every district of the valley, but the hats of Nowgong are noted for the elaborate character of the decoration and the excellence of the finish. The *jhapi* is made of bamboo and the leaves of the *takau* palm (*livistonia jenkinsiana*). The general principle is invariably the same. The head is inserted into a circular and conical erection about five inches high, which rises from a broad flat brim, but with regard to the breadth of this brim considerable latitude is allowed. The largest varieties of *jhapi* are about four feet in diameter, and are generally held over a lady or a priest to protect them from the sun. The hats that are actually worn, are usually about two feet in diameter. The foundation consists of strips of bamboo arranged horizontally and vertically at intervals of about two inches. On this is laid a small neat mesh-work of tiny bamboo slips, which supports the *takau* leaves which form the actual protection against sun and rain. Similar mesh-work on the top keeps the leaves in position, and the whole is decorated with strips of red and blue cloth, silver braid, and little balls of thread. These ornamental hats are known as *sorudoia jhapis*, and are generally worn by women, and more especially by Muhammadans and by members of the lower Hindu castes such as the Nadiyals and Brittial Baniyas. The ordinary *jhapi* for common use is known

as *dhoriah*, and the cheapest form of hat, worn by ploughmen to protect them from the sun and rain, as *halwah*. The best *jhapis* are made at Kandali, Uriagaon, Jagi, and Kathiatali, the price ranging from four annas for the cheapest and commonest variety to five rupees for the better kinds. Sieves and baskets are made in every part of the district out of split bamboo. Each villager generally makes enough to satisfy his own requirements, and they are not usually bought or sold.

Fish is caught for home consumption by every section of the community, but Doms or Nadiyals and the Charals or Namasudras are the only Hindu castes who will catch it for sale. The result of their labours is generally disposed of locally, and curing is only undertaken by Kacharis, Lalungs, and Mikirs who sell a little dried fish at the Jiajuri, Tapatjuri, Rangalu, Neli, Khola, and Amchoi *hats*. The varieties which are most esteemed for the table are :—the roe (*labeo rohita*), the chital (*notopterous chitala*), the ari (*arius*), the magur (*clarias magur*), the pufta (*callichrous bimaculatus*) and the hilsa (*clupea ilisha*). The nets most commonly in use are (1) the *Ghakata* a net in the shape of a shovel which is pushed through the water. (2) the *Khewali* a piece of netting to the centre of which a rope is attached while all round the edges there are weights. The net is thrown flat on to the surface of the water, when the weights sink and drag the sides together. It is then drawn by the rope to a boat or bank, and any fish that may have been swimming

Fishing.

in the water over which it has been cast are entangled in the pockets round the edge. The following names are applied to this net as the mesh decreases in size, *regh*, *afalia*, *duangulia*, *angatha*, and *ghan khewali*. (3) The *langi*, a large net which is stretched right across a river, the bottom being weighted and the top buoyed. The fish are then driven towards the net and become entangled in its meshes The *tana langi* is a smaller variety the two ends of which are brought round to form a circle as the net is not long enough to reach across the river. (4) The *parangi*, a square net the opposite corners of which are fastened to flexible bamboos. The net thus hangs like a sack from a stout post to which the bamboos are attached, and is lowered into the water and raised at intervals. (5) An *uthar* is a large *khewali* which is worked on the same principle, but as it is too heavy to be thrown by hand, it is spread on the surface of the water from a boat. A variety of this net with especially large meshes is called a *batihal*. (6) A *ghat-jal* is fastened to a bamboo staging above the water, and is raised and lowered on the lever principle. There are various kinds of wicker traps in use. The one most commonly employed is called a *polo* and resembles a gigantic wine glass with a short stem, and is used by a fisherman who walks through shallow water and keeps pressing the rim on the mud at the bottom. Any fish that are caught are removed through an opening at the top. The *juluki* is a smaller kind of *polo*. The *jakai* is a species of wicker work shovel, which is either dragged along the bottom or placed on the ground to

catch the small fry who take refuge in it when the mud is trampled up. Conical bamboo traps which are called *dingaru*, *thupa*, *sepa*, and *gui* and are worked on the principle of the lobster pot, are placed in small streams or running water near the rice fields.

The Government fisheries are put up to auction; the most important being:—(1) The Kalang, (2) the Pota Kalang *bil*, (3) the Mora Kalang *bil*, (4) the Samaguri *bil*, (5) the Rupahi, (6) the Mecha *bil*, (7) the Kuji *bil*, (8) the Udori *bil*, (9) the Khonaghoria *bil*, (10) the Sondora *bil*, (11) the Kapili, (12) the Sonai, (13) the Tetelisara, (14) the Barpeta *bil*, (15) the Bor Ranmari *bil*, and (16) the Kola Duar *bil*.

Altogether they realized upwards of Rs. 11,000 in 1903, the lessees recouping themselves by charging the professional fisherman who have recourse to their *mahal* rates, varying from one to twenty rupees per net. Villagers who only catch fish for their own consumption are treated very liberally and only pay a fee of four annas per annum. Figures for subsequent years will be found in Table XII.

## CHAPTER VI.

# ECONOMIC CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE, COMMUNICATIONS, TRADE, TOWN, AND LOCAL BOARD.

Rent—Wages—Prices—Food and dress—Dwellings—Economic condition of people—Indebtedness—Sources from which villagers obtain cash—Social restrictions—Communications—Development of steam navigation—Railway—Roads—Waterways—Post and Telegraph—Commerce and trade—Municipality—Local Board.

Rent.

When land is sublet the rent is paid either in cash or in kind, the former system is known as *sukani* or *khandua*, the latter as *adhi*. Under the *chukti adhi* system the tenant contracts to deliver a fixed quantity of grain irrespective of the character of the harvest, but the more usual procedure is for the tenant and the landlord to divide the crop. The following description of the different forms of *adhi* tenure is taken from a note by Mr. Basu, Assistant to the Director of Land Records and Agriculture:—

"The commonest form is *adhi* proper, in which the crop is divided equally between the landlord and the tenant. The produce may be divided either before reaping (*gach-adhi*), in which case the standing crop is divided in the field, each party reaping his own share; or after the tenant has cut the crop (*dal-adhi*) when the bundles (*danguris*) are equally divided; or after the tenant has cut and threshed the crop (*guri-adhi*) when the grain is divided. All work prior to the act of division and expenses

incidental thereto are borne by the tenant. The seed grain alone is, as a rule, found by both parties in equal shares, and if one party has advanced it in the beginning, one bundle of paddy per *bigha* is deducted from the whole in payment of the advance, and the remainder is then divided equally between the landlord and the tenant. There is still another kind of division in which the tenant undertakes to cultivate the land up to the stage of the puddle (*boka-adhi*), when the land is divided in equal parts, each party transplanting his share with the own seedlings and at his own cost.

In every form of *adhi*, the Government dues are paid by the landlord. As a rule, it is only good productive lands which can be let on *adhi* tenure, particularly on the *chukti* and *guri* forms of the tenure, In *adhi* tenure, no extra payments are called for. Cash paying tenants, however, are often called upon to pay various perquisites which go to swell the nominal rent due. The most common is gratuitous labour for a certain number of days in the year. This is ordinarily the case with all tenants holding temple lands. Not unoften the rent is partly, and in some cases, wholly remitted in consideration of labour to hereditary tenants who are descendants of former *paiks* attached to the temple."

Statistics of subtenancy were compiled in 1899-1900 and are summarised in the following abstract:—

| Total settled area for which returns compiled. Acres. | Total area sublet. Acres. | Area paying produce rents. Acres. | Area paying cash rents. Acres. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 181,900 | 9,597 | 1,009 | 8,588 |

It will be seen that only 5 per cent. of the settled area for which statistics were collected was sublet, and that a little less than a ninth of the area sublet was held on *adhi* terms. In the great majority of cases the cash rent paid did not exceed the Government revenue demand upon the land. This is only natural as it is obvious that land cannot have a high subletting

value in a district like Nowgong, where there are great expanses of Government waste, and considerable areas which have actually been brought under the plough, but have been abandoned owing to the ravages of *kala-azar*. According to the census the number of tenants in Nowgong, both workers and dependants was 3,322 in 1891 and 5,600 ten years later.

**Wages.** There is really no such thing as a labouring class in Nowgong, and in 1891, when no railway work was going on, only 1,049 persons described themselves as being supported by earthwork or general labour. Members of the lower Hindu castes and of the aboriginal tribes will occasionally work for hire, but all the local revenue officers report that year by year the difficulty of obtaining servants or labourers, which was at all times great, is steadily increasing. The daily wage in the more densely populated portion of the district, *i.e.*, along the banks of the Kalang from Silghat to Raha, varies from five to six annas, but elsewhere it is generally about one anna lower. Harvest work is paid for at lower rates, while work on the railway commands a wage of at least eight annas a day. This curious difference is probably due to the imperative necessity of getting in the harvest, while railway work is optional, and, as it is done for foreigners, is probably regarded as involving a certain loss of social status. In the Garubat mauza, a ploughman who brings his own plough and buffalo gets ten annas, or, if he only uses bullocks, six annas a day, a rate considerably higher than that roported from the

neighbouring mauza of Kampur. Carpenters and masons are said to get one rupee, and blacksmiths thirteen annas a day. The number of these artizans is, however, quite insignificant, and in quoting a rate of wages for the district it must always be borne in mind that labourers cannot as a rule be obtained at all except through the intervention of some individual possessed of local influence.

The price of rice, the staple food grain, is subject to marked fluctuations, and the total volume of business done in Nowgong town, the place where returns are recorded, is so small that they do not afford a very reliable indication of the real condition of the market. Prices.

The statement in the margin shows that there has been a general rise in price, which has, however, been subject to marked variations, as rice, for instance, was very much cheaper in 1900 than it was either in 1879 or even so long ago as 1865.

| | Seers purchaseable for a rupee. |
|---|---|
| 1862 | 20 |
| 1865 | 12 |
| 1867 | 20 |
| 1879 | 9 |
| 1889 | 16 |
| 1897 | 7 |
| 1900 | 15 |

The average price in each of the four decades ending with 1872, 1882, 1892, and 1902, was seventeen, fourteen, fourteen, and eleven seers. During the last decade the district has been passing through a period of extreme depression. *Kala-azar* was raging, the people died like sheep, and the survivors could hardly be expected to grow more grain than was absolutely necessary. Apart from this the seasons were unfavourable and the actual harvests were unusually poor. A gradual rise of prices has no

doubt been going on, but it is not so pronounced as the averages recorded would at first suggest. The price of pulse has also been rising since 1880, but there has been a considerable decrease in the price of salt. Nowgong like the rest of Assam has never suffered from famine since the days of British rule. Further details with regard to prices will be found in Table IX.

Food and dress.

The staple food of the people is boiled rice eaten with pulse, spices, and fish or vegetable curry. Amongst the well-to-do, pigeon or duck occasionally take the place of fish, but fish is a very common article of diet, and is said to be a substitute for *ghi*, which is not very largely used. Goat's flesh is eaten by Muhammadans and members of the Saktist sect, and venison is always acceptable, and is frequently procurable, especially in times of flood, when the deer are driven on to the higher ground and are ruthlessly slaughtered from boats. Tea drinking is very common, especially in the early morning. Sweetmeats usually consist of powdered grain mixed with milk, sugar, and *ghi*. The ordinary form of dress for a villager is a cotton *dhuti* or waistcloth, with a big shawl or wrapper, and sometimes a cotton coat or waistcoat. Women wear a petticoat, a scarf tied round the bust, and a shawl. Amongst the Assamese these cloths are generally home-made, and in the case of the women and of the large wraps used in the cold weather by men are frequently of silk. Men and women alike generally go bare headed, but the former sometimes twist a handkerchief round their heads, and on sunny or rainy days both sexes have recourse to the broad brimmed *jhapi*.

Boots and shoes are the exception, and in their own homes even well-to-do people wear wooden clogs. Wooden sandals are also used by villagers when travelling or working in jungle ground, where there are tufts of sharp-pointed grass.

The homestead of the ordinary peasant is generally separated from the village path by a ditch or bank, on which there is often a fence of split bamboo. Inside there is a patch of beaten earth which is always kept well swept and clean. Round this tiny courtyard stand two or three small houses, almost huts, and in a corner there are generally two open sheds, one of which contains a loom, while the other serves the purpose of a cow-house. The whole premises are surrounded by a dense grove of bamboos, plantains, and areca nut trees, and there are often numerous specimens of the arum family covering the ground. The general effect is extremely picturesque, but the presence of all these plants and trees makes the homestead very damp and excludes all sun and air. At the back there is usually a garden in which vegetables, tobacco, and other plants are grown. The houses are small, dark, and ill-ventilated, and must be very hot in summer, and as they are built on low mud plinths, must be extremely damp. The walls are made of reeds plastered with mud, or of split bamboo, the roof of thatch, the rafters and posts of bamboo. All of these materials can as a rule be obtained free of charge, and a house costs the owner nothing but the trouble of erecting it, but in spite of this they are small and badly built. The houses of the middle class are built on practically

Dwellings.

the same plan, but they are larger, and wooden posts and beams are often used in place of bamboo. The furniture of the ordinary cultivator is very simple and consists of a few boxes, wickerwork stools and baskets, brass and bell-metal utensils, and bottles and earthen pots and pans. His bedding is a quilt made out of old cloths, and he either sleeps on a mat on the damp floor or on a small bamboo *machan* or platform. The well-to-do have beds, tables, and chairs in their houses, but these articles of luxury are seldom found outside the town. This style of house is common to all the Assamese, but in the flooded tracts there are none of the graceful areca palms, as the tree cannot thrive if the roots remain long under water. These orchards and gardens are a considerable source of wealth to the cultivator, and a house standing on a bare patch of ground, has always a somewhat poverty stricken appearance to eyes accustomed to the luxuriant vegetation in which the typical Assamese cottage is embedded. The aboriginal tribes nearly always build on platforms or *machans*, and as they keep pigs and fowls they seldom have good gardens round their houses.

**Economic condition of people.**

There are no rich men amongst the Assamese in Nowgong, and very few who are even moderately well-to-do, but the explanation of this fact is not far to seek. The Assamese is a cultivator and nothing more, and with wholesale trade, crafts, and industries, he has little or no concern. Practically the whole of the profits of the external trade of the district pass into the hands of the Marwari merchants, and, though large sums of money

were expended by the Assam Bengal Railway Company in Nowgong, coolies and contractors alike were foreigners, and the profits of capital and the wages of labour passed into foreign hands. Farming on a large scale is impossible owing to want of capital and the absence of a labouring class, and the immense mass of the peasant proprietors are petty cultivators, who drive the plough themselves and carry home the rice that has been cut by their wives and daughters. Such a community can never become rich, but it is well removed above the line of poverty, and it is seldom that any villager in Nowgong goes hungry to his bed. Along the banks of the Kalang, the people have as a rule good gardens, which are a considerable source of wealth. Their rice fields are above flood level and are not liable to be destroyed by sudden inundations, but on the other hand, there is a certain amount ot pressure on the soil. On the *chapari* there is an abundance of waste land, but the floods of the Brahmaputra render the crop precarious, and prevent the growth of betel nut and other fruit trees.

The principal charges upon the indigenous inhabitants of Nowgong are, land revenue, local rates, and opium. In 1902-03, these three items amounted to Rs. 7,57,000, rather more than one-third of which had to be debited to the head of opium. The mustard crop in that year must have been worth to the villagers at least Rs. 7,76,000, so that from this crop alone they could meet all the demands made on

them by the state.* The people in the hills obtain money by the sale of lac and cotton, and the garden coolies put a considerable amount of cash in circulation. On June 30th, 1903, there were some 12,000 adult coolies in the district, who probably spent on the average about Rs. 2-8 per mensem on poultry, vegetables, and rice sold to them by the villagers, or about Rs. 3,00,000 in the year. There is a growing taste for the use of imported articles of food and dress, and the demands made upon the raiyats' purse are heavier than they were half a century ago, when the absence of any means of communication except country boats rendered it far from easy, either to buy or sell. The price of wives and the cost of the wedding ceremony is said to be increasing, a fact which points to an increase in the amount of cash in circulation, as the Indian vendor is very prone to adapt his price to what he considers to be the capacities of the purchaser. The increasing difficulty in obtaining labour also suggests a general advance in the position of the people.

**Indebtedness**

At the same time the various revenue officers report that more than half the village population are in debt. Indebtedness is said to be quite the exception in Kampur. In Gobha and Churaibahi only about one-fourth of the population are involved, and in the Raha and Samaguri tahsils one-third, but elsewhere the proportion ranges from one-half to three-fourths. But generalizations of this kind must, obviously, be received with

* The normal yield has been ascertained to be about 550 lbs. per acre, and it has been assumed that the mustard is sold for Rs. 2-8-0 per maund, an estimate, which, if any thing is unduly low. Against this must be set the fact that no deduction has been made for seed or for mustard consumed locally.

caution. The raiyats are very ready to descant on their poverty to all who turn an attentive ear, and it is doubtful whether they are as much in debt as they would fain appear. The system of taking advances on the crop, especially on the mustard crop, seems to be very common, but in many cases, no doubt, the necessity for taking these advances might be avoided by the exercise of a little thrift, industry, and foresight. It is difficult to believe that the indebtedness of the villagers can be very serious, as, apart from the standing crop, they have but little security to offer. The rate of interest charged is said to vary from 37½ to 75 per cent., the lenders being usually kaiyas or foreign traders.

**Sources from which villagers obtain cash.**

The villagers obtain the cash required for the payment of land revenue from the sale of paddy, mustard, pulse, vegetables, and poultry. In the Langpher mauza they take work on the railway or hollow out canoes, and here and there raiyats are to be found who actually consent to work upon the roads, but the number of such persons is extremely small. The standard of comfort is distinctly low, but this seems to be chiefly due to the apathy and indolence of the people. Their houses cost them nothing but the trouble of erecting them, but they are dark, squalid, and ill-ventilated, and a strong disinclination to incur any unnecessary trouble is a marked characteristic of the Assamese. Mr. Melitus, the Commissioner of the Valley, reports that the average villager will ordinarily only cultivate as much land as is absolutely necessary and no more, and that this is not merely his personal opinion, but one that is shared by the local re-

venue officials, and by almost all officers with Assam experience from the time of General Jenkins and General Hopkinson to the present day. Under these circumstances it is not to be expected that there will be much of comfort or luxury amongst the Assamese or any considerable accumulations of capital.

**Social restrictions.**

The following are some of the restrictions imposed by custom on the daily life of the people. Villagers will not plough on the day of the new moon or full moon, or the eleventh day after either of these dates. In places they decline to pay revenue on Saturdays, Mondays, Wednesdays, or Fridays, or to give loans of money or paddy on those days. There is a curious local diversity in this particular, as though Saturday, Monday, and Wednesday seem to be inauspicious days for any kind of business in almost every part of the district, in Kampur, Saturday, Tuesday, and Thursday are days on which no man pays his revenue; and in Kachamari, Sunday too is barred. There is thus not a single day in the week which is considered auspicious for the payment of revenue in every part of the district. In Pubtharia, it is said that the people will not build their houses, catch fish, or sow mustard on Mondays and Wednesdays, and in Juria, Dandua, and Tetelia, Saturdays and Tuesdays are considered to be inauspicious days on which to sow. In Gerua fencing must not be erected on Mondays, floors prepared on Tuesdays, or straw cut on Saturdays. All castes catch fish, but only Jaliya Kaibarttas, Nadiyals, Namasudras or Charals, and the aboriginal tribes will sell it, and the preparation and sale of

dried fish is eschewed even by the Hindu fishing castes. The *pat* worm is only reared by the Katani subdivision of the Jugi caste, and all the Assamese have a strong prejudice against hiring themselves out as labourers, especially if they are to be employed by Government. They are very scrupulous in many ways, object to the use of well-water, and the fear that his cart might be hired by a European and have a piece of beef or a fowl or two put in it, has been put forward by a villager before now, as a sufficient reason for not embarking in the carting business.

**Communications. Remoteness of Nowgong.**

The communications between Nowgong and the outside world have passed through five distinct stages of development:—the country boat, the Government steamer, the private cargo steamer, the daily steamer service, and the railway. The country boat was the legacy we received from the days of native rule. It had served the Ahom princes well enough, they possessed a numerous and well appointed fleet, and as they had no wish to see foreigners in the valley of the Brahmaputra, and little desire to travel out of it themselves, it was nothing to them that Nowgong was many weeks journey from the sea.

**Early difficulties.**

But when the British came into possession of Assam, the difficulty of communications proved at first to be a most serious obstacle to the development of the Province. The Brahmaputra was the great highway which connected this portion of the Company's dominions with Bengal, but the journey up the river for any boat of ordinary size was a very lengthy business.

McCosh, writing in 1837,* stated that a large boat took from six to seven weeks to come from Calcutta to Gauhati, though the post, which was conveyed in small canoes rowed by two men, who were relieved every fifteen or twenty miles, reached Gauhati in ten days and Bishnath in three days more.

Few people, presumably, had sufficient time or patience to undertake the voyage at the rainy season of the year. Week after week the weary traveller must have pursued his tedious way, his view bounded as a rule by high banks of treacherous sand, which then as now were continually being undermined by the current and falling with a crash into the water. It was only occasionally that he could relieve the monotony of the voyage by a stroll on shore, as through the greater part of its course down the valley, the banks of the river are covered with high reeds and grass, which are quite impenetrable to a man on foot, and the tedium of this dreary voyage must have been immense. Canoes, of course, could travel faster against the current, but a canoe is not a vessel in which the ordinary man can journey for many days in comfort.

**Beginning of steam navigation.**

This was the state of things for twenty-two years after our annexation of the Valley, but in 1848, the Government steamers were deputed to ply between Calcutta and Gauhati. Three years later, the Commissioner, Major Jenkins, made the not unreasonable proposal that, three or four times a year they should be allowed to proceed right up the Valley to Dibru-

* Topography of Assam, pages 9 and 82.

garh. His suggestions were negatived by the Marine Department, on the ground that the voyages would be financially a failure, but his views were strongly urged on Government by Mr. Mills when he visited the Province in 1853. The proposal met with the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor, instructions were issued for the despatch of a steamer in that year, and several voyages were made with results that were not unsatisfactory even from the financial point of view. The journey from Gauhati to Dibrugarh and back occupied no more than fifteen days, an extraordinary contrast to the interminable delay of the same voyage in a country boat, and the facilities afforded were fully appreciated by the commercial community in Assam. The cargo tendered soon exceeded the carrying capacity of the steamers, and in 1855, Lieutenant-Colonel Jenkins complained, that the vessels reached Gauhati fully laden with goods shipped in Upper Assam, so that Gauhati and the ports below derived practically no advantage from the downward service of the steamers.

As was only to be expected, the rates at first charged were fairly high, and a ticket from Calcutta to Gauhati cost no less than Rs. 150. On the other hand, the accommodation was designed on an extremely liberal scale. The regulations issued in 1851 expressly authorized passengers to carry pianos in their cabins free of freight, provided that, they were required for use during the voyage and were not in packing cases, a proviso which suggests a very deliberate

voyage as compared with the speedier travelling of the twentieth century. Freight on ordinary stores seems to have been charged at the rate of one rupee per cubic foot between Calcutta and Gauhati, but for some time longer a great part of the trade of the Province continued to go by country boat. The planters could never count on being able to despatch their tea by steamer, and were thus compelled to keep up an establishment of country boats, and having got the boats, to use them, and the same objection held good in the case of native merchants.* The cost of working the line was heavy, but in spite of this, it showed a fair profit, and it was evident, that there would be a great development of the traffic if only facilities were provided for it.

**Private steamers put on the river.**

In 1860, the India General Steam Navigation Company entered into a contract to run a pair of vessels every six weeks, provided that the *Government boats* were taken from the line, and, *since that date, the* steam navigation of the Assam Valley has been in the hands of this Company, and the River Steam Navigation Company, with whom they are associated. But, in spite of the existence of a regular service, and the quickening effects of private enterprise, travelling still continued to be very slow. The steamers did not profess to run to scheduled time, the delay at the larger ports for the loading and unloading of cargo was considerable, and the passenger no doubt often required

* Memorandum by the Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, dated the 7th February 1857.

his piano to beguile the tedium of the way. In 1861, the Commissioner, Colonel Hopkinson, was disposed to take a gloomy view of the condition of affairs, and, in a letter to Government, openly gave expression to the opinion that, it would be better to compensate the planters for any loss they might sustain, and abandon the Province, unless Government were prepared to enter upon a course of vigorous material improvement. In the same letter, he drew the following dreary picture of the isolation of Assam:—"With the furious current of the Brahmaputra, still unconquered by steam, opposing a barrier to all access from without, and not a single road fit for wheeled carriage, or even passable at all for a great portion of the year, there is such an absence of the full tide of life running through Assam, such a want of intercourse between man and man, as does and must result in apathy, stagnation, and torpidity, and a terrible sense of isolation, by which enterprise is chilled, and capital and adventurers scared away. The profits of tea cultivation should attract hundreds where tens now come, but the capitalist is not always to be found who will venture his money in a country to which access is so difficult as it is to Assam, through which his correspondence travels at the rate of a mile and a half an hour, and in which it may take a month to accomplish a journey of two or three hundred miles; nor, on the other hand, is it every spirit, however bold, that cares to encounter so dreary a banishment, and to be so entirely cut off from his fellows in a place from which exit is only possible at rare intervals, and must be so literally a prison or tomb to him."

**The daily mail service.**

Matters, however, gradually improved, and in 1884, a daily service of mail steamers was started between

Dibrugarh and Dhubri, connecting with a steamer which plied between the latter place and Jatrapur. Here the traveller who was pressed for time could take the train to Calcutta, though the line was not of the most comfortable, as more than one river had to be crossed in boats before the capital of Bengal was reached.

The introduction of a daily steamer service represented an enormous advance in the facilities for communication between Assam and the outer world. The large steamers were not uncomfortable, but progress was slow, and not only the hour but the date on which they left any given port was far from certain. The would-be traveller could not choose his own time for starting on his journey, but had to select a date on which a steamer was expected at the nearest ghat, and even then he not unfrequently had to endure a weary period of waiting by the river bank. The daily service changed all that, and combined the advantages of regularity with a speed, which, in comparision with that attained by the large cargo boats, was most commendable. During the rains Dibrugarh was reached on the fifth day after leaving Dhubri, while the downward journey was performed in three days. The navigation of the river is not entirely free from difficulty, the companies were not incited to further efforts by competition, and some years elapsed before any attempt was made to reduce the duration of the voyage. On the completion of the Assam-Bengal Railway, the companies realized that it was necessary to accelerate their

timing if they were to retain their traffic, and steamers now reach Dibrugarh on the fourth day from Dhubri, while the voyage from Dibrugarh to Goalundo only occupies three days. This, however, is the rains timing and in the cold weather it is a voyage of five days from Dhubri to Dibrugarh and four days from Dibrugarh to Goalundo.

Prior to the construction of the Assam Bengal Railway, the daily passenger steamers and the large cargo boats were practically the only means of communication between Nowgong and the outside world. Silghat which is 32 miles by road from Nowgong is the port of call and in the rains the passenger steamers are timed to reach Dibrugarh about 34 hours, and Dhubri, which is 19 hours by rail from Calcutta, about 26 hours after leaving Silghat.

The south of Nowgong is, however, now served by rail. The Gauhati branch of the Assam Bengal Railway enters the district a little to the west of Nakhola, and passes through the Gobha mauza and the Raha tahsil. At Chaparmukh it turns to the south-east and runs up the valley of the Kapili, and finally leaves the district 3½ miles west of Dimapur. The stations going from west to east are Jagi Road, Dharamtul, Chaparmukh, Kampur, Jamunamukh, Lanka, Lumding and Diphlu. At Lumding the Gauhati branch joins the main line which makes its way through the North Cachar Hills and down the Surma Valley to the sea at Chittagong, while eastward it connects with the Dibru-Sadiya Railway at Tinsukia. The railway.

In the Gobha mauza the line runs most of the way through land which lies too low for cultivation, and though in the Raha tahsil rice fields and villages once more appear, the Kapili valley is a great savannah which is very sparsely peopled. East of Jamunamukh there are hardly any signs of the handiwork of man, and a little to the west of Lumding the railway enters the huge forest which covers the valley between the Naga and the Mikir Hills and stretches far beyond the boundaries of Nowgong into Sibsagar.

Cultivation is, however, beginning to extend near Lumding, and to a less extent near Kampur, Jamunamukh, and Lanka, and with the facilities for communication now afforded, it is to be hoped that population will increase in the neighbourhood of the line. At Chaparmukh the railway taps the trade that has come down the Kapili from the hills, and tea is booked from Jagi Road, Dharamtul and Kampur, but as long as so much of the land through which it runs remains untilled and uninhabited, neither goods nor passenger traffic can be expected to be large. Kampur is the nearest station to Nowgong and is 67 miles from Guahati, 282 miles from Dibrugarh, and 412 miles from Chittagong.

**Roads: the Trunk Road.** The principal road in the district is the trunk road which runs along the whole of the south bank of the Brahmaputra from a point opposite Dhubri to Saikhoa near the eastern frontier of Lakhimpur. It enters Nowgong a little to the west of Nakhola where there is an inspection bungalow, and skirting the hills crosses the

Umiam or Kiling by a ferry at Amalighat. The first halting place after Nakhola is Dharamtul 14½ miles away, where the Kapili is crossed by a ferry; from there, there is a march of 12½ miles to the Raha inspection bungalow, but before reaching that place the Kalang must be crossed by a ferry in the rains or by a temporary bamboo bridge in the dry season. From Raha to Nowgong it is 14 miles, but before entering the station the Kalang has to be recrossed, either by a bridge or ferry. Beyond Nowgong there are inspection bungalows at Puranigudam on the 8th, Rāngagora on the 16th, and Kuwarital on the 28th mile. Here the trunk road turns sharply to the east, but there is a branch road to Silghat, 4½ miles distant, which crosses the Kalang by a ferry when that river ceases to be fordable. The road now runs between the Mikir Hills on the south, and a swamp which separates it from the Brahmaputra. At Amguri, 10 miles from Kuwarital, there is a second class inspection bungalow; and there is another halting place at Bagari 15 miles further on, and three miles west of the boundary of Nowgong. The trunk road thus runs right through the district from the south-west corner to the north-east, a total distance of about 100 miles.

**Other roads.** The Jagi road leaves the trunk road at Nakhola, crosses the Kapili by a ferry at Jagi, and after passing Aujhari and Baropujia, where there are inspection bungalows, ultimately reaches Nowgong. It is only 37 miles in length, or nearly four miles less than the trunk road between Nowgong and Nakhola, and there are only two ferries to be crossed in place of four. The Lao-

khoa road runs north from Nowgong to the Brahmaputra, a distance of 21 miles, and from there a ferry conveys the traveller to Tezpur which is situated on the opposite bank. There are inspection bungalows at Rupahi, and on the high bank of the Brahmaputra at Laokhoa, 17 miles from Nowgong. The only other roads through the *chapari mahals* are those from Nowgong to Dhing 17 miles, and Nowgong to Juria 6½ miles, at both of which places there are inspection bungalows. During the winter fair weather tracks are made over the plain to enable the raiyats to bring their mustard seed to market, but more roads are wanted in this portion of the district especially in the western mauzas. The country at the foot of the Mikir Hills in Duar Bamuni is served by the Amlaki-Kathiatali road, which runs parallel to the trunk road from Kampur to a point beyond Salana up the Diju valley. There are inspection bungalows at Kampur, (19 miles), Kathiatali (12 miles), and Chapanalla (12 miles) from Nowgong; and there are several branch roads which connect this road with the trunk road between Nowgong and Kaliabar. A branch also runs to Dabaka on the Jamuna river, where there is an inspection bungalow. There are altogether 342 miles of road in the district or one linear mile for every eleven square miles of area. This proportion is certainly not high but it has already been explained that there are huge tracts in Nowgong which are very sparsely peopled, and it is doubtful whether more roads are required except in the north-west corner of the district. Judged

by the standard of population there is a mile of road for every 760 people, which cannot be considered an illiberal allowance. All of these roads are raised above flood level, but, as they are unmetalled, sections, like the road between Nowgong and Silghat, which carry heavy traffic, become exceedingly muddy after rain. The smaller rivers and streams are crossed by bridges, which are generally made of timber, but there are no less than 48 places where ferries are still employed. In the early days of our administration goods when carried by land were either sent on elephants or were carried on men's shoulders, but bullock or buffalo carts are now freely used and there were nearly 1,100 of such carts in the district in 1904.

The Brahmaputra is the great high-way for steamer traffic, but country boats do not generally go far above Gauhati. Reference has been already made to the extent to which the Kalang and Kapili are used for inland traffic. The following statement shows the other rivers in the district which are recognised trade routes, and the distance to which a boat of four tons burthen can proceed up them in the rains. The principal articles of commerce brought down these rivers are mustard, cotton, lac, and other forest produce. **Waterways**

| Name of river. | Highest point to which a boat of 4 tons burthen can proceed in the rains. | Name of river. | Highest point to which a boat of 4 tons burthen can proceed in the rains. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Barpani ... | Amtring hat. | Jamuna ... | Bokolia. |
| Deopani ... | Deopani ghat. | Kalanga ... | Kalanga. |
| Diphlu ... | Beyond district boundary. | Kiling or Umiam | Nearly to district boundary. |
| Doiang ... | Kyloo village. | Misa ... | Misa bridge. |
| Gatonga ... | Bagori. | Nanai ... | Chapanalla |
| Haria ... | ... .. | Tetelisara ... | Jamuna river. |

**Post and Telegraph.**

The following statement shows that, though there has been a comparatively small increase in the number of post offices since 1875, there has been an enormous development of postal business.

| Number of Post Offices in | | Number of letters and post cards omitting thousands delivered in | | | Number of Savings Bank accounts in | | Balance at the credit of the depositor in | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1875-76 | 1903-04 | 1861-62 | 1870-71 | 1903-04 | 1872 | 1903-04 | 1872 | 1903-04 |
| | | | | | | | Rs. | Rs. |
| 6 | 11 | 12 | 41 | 138 | 5 | 1,131 | 97 | 2,42,800 |

There were only 11 offices in 1904, as compared with 6 in 1875, but the number of letters and postcards delivered was nearly twelve times the number handled in 1861-62. The savings bank has also made most satisfactory progress, and considering the low rate of interest given, and the scarcity of capital in the district the volume of deposits is considerable. The figures given for 1872 were, however, returned after the bank had only been open for three months. A list of the post offices in the district will be found in the Appendix—Statement B.

**Commerce and trade.**

It is hardly necessary to say that in a sparsely populated district like Nowgong, where there are no towns of any size, and, apart from tea, no industries worth mentioning, commerce and trade are not of great importance.

In addition to tea the principal exports are mustard seed, which is raised in considerable quantities on the *chaparis*, cotton, lac, cocoons, and chillies which come

down from the hills, bamboo mats, thatching grass, wax, and other forest produce. The principal trade routes are the Brahmaputra, the Kalang, and the various water courses in the *chapari*, down which the mustard is boated when the river rises. The Kapili affords an outlet to the trade of the North Cachar Hills which comes to Chaparmukh, and is either transferred to the railway there, or continues by boat *viâ* the Kalang to the Brahmaputra. The chief imports are pulse and other food grains, cotton thread and cloth, umbrellas, sugar, salt, opium, *ghi*, kerosine, and other oils, and hardware. Nearly all the export and import trade is in the hands of the Marwari merchants, locally known as Kaiyas, who are the great shop-keepers and money lenders of the Assam Valley. They purchase their surplus products from the raiyats, and supply them in return with cloth, thread, salt, oil, and, very often opium. There are altogether some 40 shops in Nowgong town and nearly 250 more scattered about the district. The importance of the hill trade is indicated by the fact that, no less than thirty-three of these depots are situated in the Rangkhang mauza.

In addition to the Kaiya, there are a few Muhammadans from Bengal who have opened shops in Nowgong town where they sell furniture, hardware, and general haberdashery. Some of the smaller village shops are owned by Assamese, but the natives of the district have little or no commercial instinct or capacity, and allow almost the whole of the profits of their trade to be monopolised by foreigners.

In statement C in the Appendix will be found a list of the principal local centres of trade.

Markets and fairs.

Retail trade is largely transacted at markets which are held at different villages on certain days in the week. The articles offered for sale include rice and other grain, fruit and country vegetables, poultry, earthenware and metal vessels, oil, molasses, tobacco, and cotton cloth. These markets are attended by all the people in the neighbourhood and there is a considerable amount of business done.

Statement D in the Appendix contains a list of all the villages in which markets are held. Regular fairs are also held at certain seasons of the year, but are not as a rule very numerously attended, in spite of the fact that they are usually associated with some religious festival. The places at which fairs are held are shewn in Statement E in the Appendix. These gatherings take place in April or May, except in the Raha tahsil where they are held in May or June.

Municipality.

Nowgong town was constituted a municipality under Act V, B. C. of 1876 in 1894, but it is little more than a large village, and the total population found within municipal limits in 1901 was only 4,430. Revenue is raised by a tax on persons amounting to $\frac{7}{16}$ per cent. of income, a tax on Government buildings, and a tax on animals and carts, but all these items taken together only brought in Rs. 2,400 in 1902-03. An annual grant from Government of Rs.5,000, and realizations from pounds and

markets form more important sources of income. The incidence of taxation per head of population in 1902-03, excluding the amount realized from Government buildings, was only 4 annas 2 pie, which was less than that imposed in any other municipality or union in the Province. The affairs of the town are managed by eleven commissioners of whom nine are natives and seven non-officials. There are fourteen public wells, but rigid Hindus who have no private well, drink the water of the Kalang river, in spite of the fact that it is exposed to every form of pollution, as they object to using wells from which water has been drawn by a man of lower caste. Fortunately this prejudice is gradually dying out. The public buildings and the bungalows of the European residents stand on a fine maidan dotted over with really magnificent trees, and the general effect is rather that of a park than of a town. The roads are kept in good order and adequate arrangements are made for the drainage, conservancy, and lighting of the place. A statement of municipal receipts and expenditure will be found in Table XVII.

**Local Board.**

In the early days of British Adminstration there was little money available for public works of any kind, and what there was, was generally expended under the control of the Public Works Department or the District Magistrate.

In 1872, the management of the district roads was entrusted to a committee presided over by the Deputy Commissioner. The funds at their disposal were partly obtained from tolls and ferries on local roads and other

miscellaneous sources, but principally from grants made by the Bengal Government from the amalgamated district road fund. In 1874, when Assam was erected into a separate Adminstration, the Government of India assigned one-seventeenth of the net land revenue for local purposes. The district improvement fund was then started, and the administration of its resources was, as before, entrusted to the Deputy Commissioner assisted by a committee. The actual amount placed at their disposal was not large, and in 1875-76 the total income of the district funds of the Province was only Rs. 1,85,000, which was a small sum in comparison with the twelve and a half lakhs of rupees received by the Local Boards in 1903-04. In 1879, a Regulation was passed providing for the levy of a local rate, and the appointment of a committee in each district to control the expenditure on roads, primary education, and the district post. Three years later the district committees were abolished by executive order, and their place was taken by boards established in each subdivision, which are the local authorities in existence at the present day.

**Functions.** The Local Board is entrusted with the maintenance of all roads within its jurisdiction, except a few main lines of communication, the provision and maintenance of local staging bungalows and dispensaries, and the supervision of village sanitation, vaccination, and the district post. It is also in charge of primary education, subject to the general control of the Education Department, and is empowered to make

grants-in-aid to schools of higher grade, subject to certain rules. For these purposes, it has placed at its disposal the rate which is levied under the Assam Local Rates Regulation of 1879, at the rate of one anna per rupee on the annual value of lands as well as the surplus income of pounds and ferries and some minor receipts. This income is supplemented by an annual grant from Provincial Funds. The principal heads of income and expenditure are shown in Table XVI. The annual budgets of the Board are submitted to the Commissioner for sanction. The estimates for all works costing Rs. 500 or over must be submitted to the Public Works Department for approval, and important works, requiring much professional skill, are made over for execution to that department. Less important works are entrusted to the board surveyor.

## CHAPTER VII.

# GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

Land revenue—Native system—Early settlements—The settlement of 1893-94—Expansion of land revenue—Established and fluctuating cultivation—Annual and periodic leases—Land tenures—Collection of land revenue—Tahsildari and mauzadari system—Area of unsettled waste—Excise—Opium—Country spirit—*Laopani*—Ganja—Income tax—Stamps—Public Works—Government—Adminstration of justice—Registration—Volunteering—Police—Jails—Education—Medical Aspects—Surveys.

**Land Revenue. Native system.**

The system of revenue in force under the Ahom kings was one of personal service. The whole of the adult male population was divided into bodies of three men called *gots*, each individual being styled a *paik*. One *paik* out of the three was always engaged on labour for the State, and while so employed, was supported by the remaining members of his *got*. In return for his labour, each *paik* was allowed 8 *bighas** of *rupit* land, and the land occupied by his house and garden, which is now called *basti*, free of revenue. Any land taken up in excess of this amount, was assessed at annas 4 a *bigha*. In addition to this, the villagers paid a poll tax of one rupee for each adult *paik*.

Buchanan Hamilton, writing in 1809 states that each pargana was let for a term of year to a Chaudri,

* One acre = 3·025 *bighas*.

who made what profit he could out of land held in excess of the *paiks'* free grants. The Chaudris are said to have retained for their own use three-fifths of the gross collections, and to have treated the raiyats in a very oppressive manner. The nominal rent per plough of land in Kamrup was Rs. 2 but the exactions of the Chaudri raised it to Rs. 5 or Rs. 7. The yield of a plough was said to be 79 maunds of "rough rice" and 16 maunds of mustard seed, and as estimates of yield prior to the era of crop experiments were generally too high, the area of a plough was probably between four and five acres, and the rates exacted by the Chaudri must at that time have seemed oppressive. These remarks have been quoted, as, in all probability, the system prevailing in Nowgong was not dissimilar from that existing in Kamrup.

**Early settlements.**

On the occupation of the country by the British, the system of compulsory labour was abolished and the *paik* land assessed to revenue. In 1835, the rates assessed in Nowgong and Kaliabar were four annas a *bigha* on *rupit*, and two annas a *bigha* on *bao* land and land exposed to flood.† *Basti* land was held free of revenue: but a poll tax of one rupee was levied on each adult. In the Mikir Mahal there was no poll tax, but land revenue was assessed at five annas and two and a half annas per *bigha*. In the *chapari*, Raha, Jamunamukh, and Morang no land revenue was assessed, but there was a tax of two or three rupees on each plough, and one rupee on each man cultivating with a spade. A poll tax of one rupee was also levied

† Letter No. 121 from Lieut. Brodie, dated 14-11-1835.]

on Doms and Haris, and of five rupee on each Moria or working brass-smith.

**The settlement of 1868.**

Prior to 1868, the rates assessed did not exceed five and a half annas per *bigha*, but in that year the Commissioner, Lieutenant-Colonel Hopkinson, introduced a distinction between *basti* or garden and other land and raised the *bigha* rates to one rupee for *basti*, ten annas for *rupit*, and eight annas for other land. No detailed enquiries were made, there was no attempt to estimate the comparative value of the three different classes of land, there was no discrimination between good and bad land in the same class or even between district and district. The revised rates were, however, so moderate that it was never seriously contended that they would have an oppressive incidence even on the worst land on which they were imposed. Colonel Hopkinson was of opinion that the existing assessment was ridiculously low, and in support of his opinion pointed out that in 1864-65 the receipts from opium were about four lakhs of rupees more than the total land revenue of his division, an excess which in those days, represented a dfference of about forty per cent. The new assessment was successfully introduced in 1868-69, and in spite of the enormous enhancement the revenue was collected without difficulty.

**The settlement of 1893-94.**

The next settlement was made in 1893. The three-fold divison of land was retained, but instead of imposing the same rate on all land of the same class throughout the district, the villages were

| Class | Basti. | | Rupit | | Faringati. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Rs. | A. | Rs. | A. | Rs. | A. |
| 1st | 1 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| 2nd | 1 | 4 | 0 | 14 | 0 | 10 |
| 3rd | 1 | 2 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 9 |
| 4th | 1 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 8 |

divided into four grades and, as will be seen from the statement in the margin, the rates imposed per *bigha* varied with the class of the village. The villages were provisionally graded by the Director of Land Records and Agriculture, the class in which each village was placed being determined by the demand for land, and not by any intrinsic considerations of the value of the produce, the fertility of the soil, or the profits of cultivation. The demand for land was estimated by ascertaining the density of the population, the proportion of settled to unsettled land, and the proportion of fluctuating cultivation. These lists were sent to local officers for examination, and were modified by them in view of the fertility of the soil, the facilities for bringing the produce to market, and the rents paid by subtenants where ascertainable. This enquiry was carried out by the ordinary district staff within the space of a single cold weather, and the results obtained made no pretensions to scientific accuracy. Such accuracy was considered to be unnecessary, as it was not intended to impose anything like the maximum assessment on the land. The Government had no desire to assess up to its fair share of the value of the produce of the soil, and under these circumstances it was contended that it would be waste of time and money to have recourse to any minute and elaborate classification of the soils, to crop experiments on a large scale, or to a close examination of all the elements that affect the net profits of the cultivator. The theory on which the settlement was based was that the worst

lands were capable of bearing the assessment imposed, and that Government alone was a loser by its inequalities. A fresh settlement of the district, which will discriminate more closely between good and inferior land in the same class is now in progress.

Land in Nowgong town is assessed at a uniform rate of two rupees a *bigha* the place not being of sufficient size and importance to warrant as yet a special settlement of town lands. In the Mikir Hills the people pay a tax of two rupees a house, and no attempt is made to measure up the land that is actually cultivated by them.

**Expansion of land evenue.**

The following statement shows the gradual expansion of the land revenue and the settled area since the district first came uuder our administration. The figures for years in which a new settlement first came into operation, are printed in italics.

| A D. | Rs. | Acres. |
|---|---|---|
| 1834-35 | 60,475 | Not available. |
| 1852-53 | 1,53,024 | 176,589 |
| 1865-66 | 2,16,660 | 233,117* |
| *1868-69* | *3,53,147* | Not available |
| 1892-93 | 5,41,144 | 344,522 |
| *1893-94* | *6,90,980* | *335,469* |
| 1902-03 | 4,67,478 | 265,889 |

The great decrease between 1893-94 and 1902-03 is primarily due to the destruction of one fourth of the total population by *kala azar*. As soon as the full extent of this appalling calamity had been revealed by the census of 1901, the Government of India directed that,

* Commissioner's letter dated 21-9-1867.

as a measure of relief, the land revenue demand of the district should be reduced by one lakh of rupees, and it is satisfactory to know that at last the tide has turned and that the settled area is once more increasing.

**Established and fluctuating cultivation.**

The system of cultivation in the district falls into two main heads, established and fluctuating. In the established area the staple crop is *sali* or transplanted paddy. Land is not readily resigned, and it occasionally possesses a certain market value, though in Nowgong this value has been materially affected by the fearful mortality that has prevailed of recent years. In the fluctuating tracts the staple crops are mustard, pulse, and summer rice, *ahu*, and continual change is one of the essential elements of cultivation, the same field being seldom cropped for more than three years in succession. Most of this fluctuating cultivation is situated on the *chapari*, or tract of land lying between the Brahmaputra and the Kalang.

**Annual and periodic leases.**

The bulk of the land on which the staple crops of the district are grown is held direct from Government by the actual cultivators of the soil on annual or periodic leases. The periodic lease confers a right of re-settlement and a heritable and transferable title. Annual leases merely authorise the occupation of the land for a single year, though in practice the rights of transfer, inheritance, and re-settlement are recognized. The only drawback of the annual lease lies in the fact that if the land happens to be required by Government, it can be resumed without payment of compensation to the occupant. Land held under either

form of lease or any individual field within the holding can be resigned, on formal notice of the fact being given to the Deputy Commissioner.

The mandal. The basis of the land revenue system is the *mandal*, the village accountant and surveyor, who draws a modest stipend ranging from Rs. 8 to Rs. 12 per mensem. In March he proceeds to his circle, inspects the fields which have been formally resigned to see whether they have been actually relinquished, tests the boundaries of fields taken up in recent years to see whether they are in accordance with the map, and surveys land which has been broken up for what is called the regular settlement or for which a formal application has been filed. His two principal registers are the *Dagchitha*, in which particulars are entered for each field within the village, and the *Jamabandi* or rent roll, which classifies the fields by holdings and shows the area covered by each lease. During the hot weather he is occupied with the revision of his maps and registers, and the preparation of his leases. When the winter comes, he again proceeds to the field, distributes the leases he has prepared, and surveys the land which has been broken up since his former tour, and which is included in what is known as the *dariabadi* or supplementary settlement. He is also required to prepare statistics of the area under different crops; he assists in the collection of the revenue, and is often ordered to report on local disputes connected with the land. In most Provinces in India, a settlement is concluded for a term of years. During its currency no land which is held on lease can

be resigned, and there is not, as a rule, any appreciable quantity of waste land to be taken up. The state of affairs in Nowgong is very different. In 1902-03, the total settled area was 265,889 acres, the area excluded from settlement was 26,651 acres, and the area of land newly included in settlement 34,685 acres. It must not, however, be supposed that this kaleidoscopic shifting of the fields is taking place in every portion of the district, and that everywhere may be seen the spectacle of cultivated land becoming jungle and jungle land changing into fields of waving rice. In the established portion land is seldom given up, but in the fluctuating area, as has been already explained, it is less trouble to burn the jungle and break up new land every second or third year, than to clean the fields of the weeds which spring up after they have been two or three times cropped.

**Superior settlement staff.**

Above the *mandal* comes the supervisor kanungo, a peripatetic officer on pay ranging from Rs. 30, to Rs. 40, who checks his work both in the field and in the office. The superior revenue officers are called sub-deputy collectors and draw salaries ranging from Rs. 100 to Rs. 200 per mensem. The appointments are usually made by selection from candidates who must be of good physique and moral character, of respectable family, under 25 years of age, and must either have taken a university degree or have read up to that standard.

**Land tenures**

The different tenures in the district fall under two main classes—(1) those under which land is held for the cultivation of ordinary crops, and (2) those under

which grants have been made for the growth of tea or other crops, which are not included amongst the ordinary staples of the Province, and which require a considerable amount of capital for their production. The bulk of the land included in the first class is settled under the ordinary rules at full rates, but there are also considerable areas of revenue free land *(lakhiraj)* and land settled at half rates *(nisf-khiraj)*. In the time of the Ahom kings the whole of this land is said to have been held rent free, but in 1834 the Government of India ruled that "all rights to hold lands free of assessment founded on grants made by any former Government must be considered to have been cancelled by the British conquest. All claims, therefore, for restoration to such tenures can rest only on the indulgence of Government without any right." Mr. David Scott, the first British Commissioner of Assam, found that, even under the Ahom Rajas, these revenue free lands had been assessed at the rate of five annas a *pura*,* and he imposed this cess, which was subsequently raised to eight annas, upon them. The Government of India then directed that an enquiry should be instituted into these claims and that all cases in which land was held on *bôna-fide* grants dating from before the time of the Burmese conquest, or an account of services which were still performed, should be reported to them for orders. These instructions were not fully observed by the Commissioner at that time, Captain (subsequently General) Jenkins. This officer, for reasons which have never

* A *pura*=4 *bighas*, 3·025 *bighas*=1 acre.

been ascertained, drew a broad distinction between *debottar* or temple lands and *brahmottar* and *dharmottar* lands, *i.e.*, lands which were devoted to some religious purpose but were not actually the property of a temple. The former he released from all claims for revenue; on the latter he imposed the rate assessed by Mr. Scott, which happened to be half the full rates prevailing at the time. No report was even submitted to the Government of India and no final orders were ever received from them, but the right of the former class of proprietors to hold free of revenue, and of the latter at half the usual rates, has been definitely recognised. Waste land included within the boundaries of *nisf-khiraj* estates is assessed at 1 anna 3 pies per *bigha*, and as the proportion of uncultivated land in these estates is fairly high, this assessment adds considerably to the gross demand. The total area of *lakhiraj* land in the district in 1903-04 was 2,314 acres and of *nisf-khiraj* land 5,382 acres. The area settled year by year at full rates is shewn in Table XIV.

**Grant of land for the cultivation of special crops.**

Two sets of rules were in force for the grant of land for tea prior to 1861. The underlying principle in each case was that the land should be held on long leases at low but progressive rates of revenue, and that precautions should be taken against land speculation by the imposition of clearance conditions. Between 1861 and 1876 the fee simple tenure of waste land grants was put up to auction at an upset price of Rs. 2-8-0 an acre, which in 1874 was raised to Rs. 8. The holders of grants under the earlier rules of 1838 and 1854

were allowed to purchase a fee simple tenure by payment of twenty times the revenue then due, provided that the clearance conditions had been carried out. Advantage was very generally taken of this concession, and there is no longer in the district any land held under the rules of 1838 and only 469 acres under the rules of 1854, while there are 21,349 acres held on fee simple tenure. The existing rules came into force in 1876. The land is sold at an upset price of Re. 1 per acre, for, though it is nominally put up to auction, there is no case on record in which more than one applicant appeared to bid. For two years the grant remains revenue free, and the rates gradually rise to 8 annas an acre in the eleventh and one rupee in the twenty-first year. The lease runs for 30 years, and when it expires the land is liable to re-assessment. The total area settled under these rules will be found in Table XIV.

**Collection of land revenue: the small mauza.**

The collection of land revenue was first introduced in Nowgong in 1833-34. Engagements were entered into with the raiyats direct, but the duty of collection was entrusted to a bissoah who received a commission of 12½ per cent., though he was not held responsible for the payment of the total revenue demand, irrespective of the amount that he actually succeeded in collecting. In 1840, a village accountant or kakati was appointed, who received a commission of 2½ per cent., and this, in addition to the grants of land given to the peons, raised the total cost of collection to 16¼ per cent., of the revenue realized. In 1839-40, the experiment was tried of making a

settlement with the mauzadar for a term of years, and holding him responsible for any losses that might occur, but allowing him to absorb any profits that accrued from the extension of cultivation. In practice this system was found to be unsatisfactory, and was abandoned, and recourse was again had to the annual settlement under which the fiscal officer was only responsible for the collection of the revenue. Efforts were made to induce respectable mauzadars to take five years leases of the *chapari mahals*, on a commission of no less than 20 per cent. Twenty *chapari* mauzas were settled in this manner, but in every case but one, the mauzadars threw up their leases, and accepted annual settlements on the old rate of commission. The fiscal units at that time were very small and in 1853 there were no less than 158 mauzadars, exclusive of those appointed for the Mikir Hills.*

**Larger mauzas and tahsils.**

The general tendency, since that date, has been to increase the size of the unit of collection. In 1867, the mauzadars, as the collecting officers were called, received 15 per cent. of the revenue as commission, and were allowed half the revenue of land reclaimed during the currency of the settlement. Three years later, their commission was reduced to 10 per cent. and in 1872 the further restriction was imposed that this 10 per cent. could only be drawn on the first Rs. 6,000 of revenue, 5 per cent. being allowed on revenue in excess of that sum. In 1883, the idea gained ground that Government would do better by putting

* *Vide* Report on the Province of Assam by A. J. Moffatt Mills—Calcutta 1854.

the mauzadar aside and employing salaried officials as a collecting agency. Mauzas were accordingly amalgamated and placed in charge of an official called a tahsildar, who was remunerated by a fixed salary and was exempted from the responsibility imposed upon the mauzadar of paying in the revenue on the due dates, irrespective of the amounts actually collected by him. Three tahsils were opened in 1892, at Nowgong, Raha, and Samaguri, an arrangement which left the mauzadars still responsible for 60 per cent. of the land revenue demand. It was subsequently found, that there was some difficulty in dealing direct with so large a body of raiyats, and in 1904, the tahsils were again broken up into mauzas.

**Compulsory realization of revenue.** The revenue demand on account of the regular settlement is due in two instalments; three-fifths on January 15th, and two-fifths on the 15th February, except in those villages which meet the government demand from the sale of mustard and pulse when it is due in one instalment on March 15th. The demand on account of the supplementary settlement, is also due in one instalment on that date.

In 1903-04, notice of demand was issued on account of 10 per cent. of the total land revenue demand, but it was only necessary to attach property on account of 2 per cent. The number of cases in which it was necessary to have recourse to sale was very small, and the revenue on account of which property was sold only represented 0·05 per cent. of the total demand.

**Area of unsettled waste.**

The figures below show the total area of the district as reported by the Assistant Surveyor General, Calcutta, the settled area, and the area of reserved forests in 1902-03 and the area of waste land at the disposal of Government in that year.

| | | | | Square miles |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total area of district | ... | ... | ... | 3,843 |
| ,, settled area | ... | ... | ... | 415 |
| Area of reserved forests | ... | ... | ... | 142 |
| Area of unsettled waste | ... | ... | .. | 3,286 |

No less than 85 per cent. of the total area falls in the latter category, but it must not be supposed that the whole of this land is fit for cultivation or human habitation. The figures include the area of roads and of tracts that are permanently under water, which amounts to a very considerable total. It also includes the area of the Mikir Hills, which could never support a dense population, of extensive tracts which are submerged during the rainy season and are hardly fit for permanent habitation, and of land which is too high or barren to be fit for the growth of food crops. It is useless to attempt to form any estimate of the proportion of the unsettled area in which cultivation could be carried on with profit, and it is hardly necessary to do so, as it is obvious that the district could support a much larger population than it now possesses.

The most densely populated portion of the district is the tract of country lying on either side of the Kalang, between Silghat and Raha, but there is not a single mauza in which the area of unsettled land is not extremely large. Nearly one-third of the *sadr* tahsil

was, for instance, unsettled in 1902-03, but this, for Nowgong, is but a small proportion. The following statement shows the unsettled area of the *chapari* mauzas, and there is also an enormous area of waste land in the Kapili valley.

| Mauza. | Total area in acres. | Unsettled area in acres. |
|---|---|---|
| Juria ... ... | 80,000 | 76,000 |
| Dhing ... ... | 70,000 | 39,000 |
| Mikirbheta ... ... | 42,000 | 31,000 |
| Gerua Bokani .. ... | 98,000 | 87,000 |
| Ghugua ... ... | 40,000 | 35,000 |
| Mayang ... .. | 76,000 | 70,000 |

**Excise: Opium.** From Table XII it will be seen that excise furnishes nearly three-eighths of the total revenue of Nowgong, and that five-sixths of the excise receipts are derived from the sale of opium. Prior to 1860, no restriction was placed upon the cultivation of the poppy, but the evil effects of unrestrained indulgence in opium were undeniable, and, in that year, poppy cultivation was prohibited, and the drug was issued from* the treasury, the price charged being Rs. 14 a seer. This change was bitterly resented by the people, and cost the life of the Assistant Commissioner, Lieutenant Singer, but the story of the Phulaguri riots has already been told in the chapter on the history of the district. The price was quickly raised to Rs. 20 in 1862, Rs. 22 in 1863, Rs. 23 in 1873, Rs. 24 in 1875, Rs. 26 in 1879, Rs. 32 in 1883, and Rs. 37 in 1890, the figure at which it

* Opium is said to have been introduced by some of Captain Welsh's Soldiers and tohave been first used as a specific against bowel complaints. The poppy was first cultivated in Beltala near Gauhati and the drug which was at first regarded as a medicine soon enslaved the Assamese.

now stands. While Assam was under the Bengal Government, licenses for the retail vend of opium were issued free of charge. In 1874, a fee of Rs. 12 per annum was levied on each shop, and in the following year, it was raised to Rs. 18. Between 1877 and 1883, the right to sell opium in a particular *mahal* was put up to auction, but this system was found to be unsatisfactory, and in the latter year the individual shops were sold as is done at the present day. The general result of the Government policy has been to enormously reduce the facilities for obtaining the drug. In 1873-74 there were in the district 867 shops for the retail vend of opium, whereas in 1903-04 there were only 134.

The following figures show the extent to which the consumption of the drug has been affected by the raising of the rate of duty. 1873-74, 284 maunds; 1879-80, 179 maunds; 1889-90, 243 maunds; 1899-1900, 168 maunds; and 1902-1903, 191 maunds. The population, in the first and the last years of the series, was about the same, though the number of aboriginal tribesmen, who are the chief consumers, was probably smaller in the latter year, but the quantity of opium issued was only two-thirds of the amount sold in 1874. Prior to 1860, when there were no restrictions upon the cultivation of the poppy, the opium habit had taken a firm hold upon the people, and even though it was taxed, habitual eaters were unable to forswear the drug. But the steady rise in price and the diminution in the number of shops, naturally tended to restrict

consumption and to deter the younger generation from taking to the habit. During the first half of the century, opium probably cost the people about Rs. 5 a seer.* Since 1890, the price has varied from Rs. 40 to Rs. 50 a seer, and it is only natural, that such a heavy increase in the cost should be attended with a decrease in the amount consumed.

The drug is generally swallowed in the form of pills or mixed with water and drunk, and is seldom smoked as this is considered to have an injurious effect upon the constitution of the smoker. Madak is made by mixing boiled opium with pieces of dried pan leaf, and stirring it over the fire. The compound is then rolled up into pills and smoked. Chandu is made out of opium boiled with water till the water has all evaporated, and is smoked like madak in the form of pills.

**Country spirit.**

The outstill system is still in force in the district, that is to say the right to manufacture and sell spirit at a particular locality is put up to auction, and no attempt is made to levy duty on the actual quantity of spirit distilled. The abstract in the margin shows that of recent years there has been a considerable increase in the revenue derived from country spirits. But the system of auctioning the shops depends for its success upon the existence of competition at the sales, and the lowness of the fees received in 1880 and 1890

| | No. of shops. | Revenue. |
|---|---|---|
| | | Rs. |
| 1873-74 ... | 4 | 2,944 |
| 1879-80 . | 9 | 4,063 |
| 1889-90 ... | 15 | 5,782 |
| 1899-1900 | 19 | 25,292 |

* Vide Statement XIV appended to a report submitted by the Deputy Commissioner of Darrang, on February 15th, 1835.

suggests that at that time purchasers were able to obtain licenses at practically their own prices. The large increase in the foreign population, most of whom are liquor drinkers, which more than trebled itself between 1881 and 1901, has been the principal cause of the expansion of the trade, as, though the aboriginal tribes are great consumers of liquor, they prefer a strong beer which they brew from rice to ordinary country spirit.

The attention of the Administration has been more than once directed to the discovery of the most effective means of discouraging a taste for drinking, but the most serious obstacle to improvement lies in the fact that, if the supply of licensed liquor is cut off, rice-beer and spirit can be readily manufactured by the people, and complaints have more than once been received of excessive drunkenness on tea gardens which were situated far beyond the reach of any licensed liquor shop. The outstill system is not theoretically the most desirable, but, owing to the difficulty of communications and the facilities that exist for the manufacture of illicit liquor, it has not yet been found possible to introduce any more satisfactory methods in its place. The following measures have recently been introduced with the object of reducing, as far as possible, the evils attendant on the liquor trade. A special excise establishment has been entertained, the vendor is required to arrange for an abundant supply of good drinking water near his shop, and his license can be withdrawn if he is twice convicted of allowing drunkenness and disorderly conduct near the still.

The most important shops are situated at Lumding Jakhalabandha, Nowgong, and Barjuri.

Country spirit. The still.

Country spirit is manufactured by native methods and generally in what is known as the open still. The apparatus employed consists of a large brass or copper retort, which is placed over the fire, to the top of which is fitted the still head, a compound vessel, part of which is made of earthenware and part of brass. The wash is placed in the retort, and, as it boils, rises in the form of vapour into the still head, over the outer surface of which a stream of cold water is continually kept flowing. As the vapour cools, it is precipitated in the form of liquid, and is carried off by a bamboo tube into a vessel placed at the side. The mouth of this tube is open, and the spirit trickles from it into the vessel beneath, so that the outer air has access by this channel into the still head and retort in which the process of distillation is going on. In the closed still, the vapour passes down two tubes into two receivers, where it is cooled and condenses into liquid. These tubes are so fixed to the receivers that the air cannot have access to the spirit, and, though distillation does not proceed so rapidly, the liquor produced is stronger than that obtained from the open still.

Material employed.

The material employed is generally the flower of the mohwa tree (*bassia latifolia*), which contains a very large proportion of sugar, but its place is sometimes taken by molasses and rice. The following are the proportions in which these ingredients are generally mixed: mohwa 30 seers and water 60 seers; or mohwa 25 seers,

molasses 5 seers, and water 60 seers; or boiled rice 20 seers, molasses 10 seers, and water 80 seers. *Bakhar* a substance composed of leaves, roots, and spices, whose actual ingredients are not divulged by the villagers who manufacture it, is frequently added to the wash, which is put to ferment in barrels. Fermentation takes three or four days in summer and a week in the cold weather, and the wash is then considered to be ready for the still.

The process of distillation takes about three hours. A retort of 40 gallons yields two gallons of spirit in an hour and three-quarters, three gallons in two hours and a quarter, and four gallons in three hours. The best and strongest spirit comes off first, and in the case of a brew of 30 seers of mohwa, the first 3½ gallons will be classed as *phul* if they are at once drawn off from the receiver. If they are allowed to remain while two more gallons are distilled, the whole 5½ gallons will be classed as *bangla*. The exact proportions vary, however, at the different shops, some distillers taking 4¼ gallons of *phul* or 5¼ gallons of *bangla* from 30 seers of mohwa. Occasionally only two gallons of spirit are distilled from 30 seers of mohwa, and the liquor is then called *thul*, is very strong, and is sold for one or two rupees a quart. *Thul* is also sometimes made by redistilling *bangla*. Only one kind of liquor is generally taken from each distillation as if the *thul* or *phul* were removed, the spirit subsequently distilled would be not only weak but impure. Strong liquor watered to reduce it to a lower strength is not considered palatable, and it

seems to be the usual practice to distil the liquor at the actual strength at which it will be sold. One disadvantage of the cheaper kinds of liquor is that it will not keep, and in four or five weeks it is said to lose all its spirituous qualities.

aopani. *Laopani*, or rice beer, is the national drink of the unconverted tribes, and a special name, *modahi*, is applied to those who have to some extent attorned to Hinduism, but have not yet abandoned their ancestral liquor. It is also taken by some of the humble Hindu castes, and is largely used by garden coolies if facilities are not afforded to them for obtaining country spirit. The following is the usual system of manufacture followed: The rice is boiled and spread on a mat, and *bakhar* is powdered and sprinkled over it. After about twelve hours it is transferred to an earthen jar, the mouth of which is closed, and left to ferment for three or four days. Water is then added and allowed to stand for a few hours, and the beer is at last considered to be ready. The usual proportions are 5 seers of rice and 3 chattaks of *bakhar* to some 8 or 10 quarts of water, and the liquor produced is said to be much stronger than most European beers. Liquor is often illicitly distilled from *laopani* or boiled rice, by the following simple method. An earthen pot with a hole in the bottom is placed on the top of the vessel containing the *laopani* or rice, and the whole is set on the fire. The mouth of the upper pot is closed by a cone-shaped vessel filled with cold water, and a saucer is placed at the bottom of the pot over the hole. The vapour rises into the upper of the

two jars, condenses against the cold cone, with which the mouth is closed, and falls in the form of spirit on to the saucer beneath. Care must of course be taken to see that the various cracks are closed against the passage of the spirituous vapour, but this can easily be done with strips of cloth.

Ganja is usually mixed with water, kneaded till it becomes soft, cut into small strips, and smoked. Wild ganja grows very freely in Nowgong but it is doubtful whether it is much used except as a medicine for cattle. It does not produce such strong effects as the ganja of Rajshahi, but the leaves are sometimes dried and mixed with milk, water, and sugar to form a beverage. Ganja is not much used except by foreigners, and from Table XII it will be seen that the revenue raised from this drug is comparatively small. It is imported from Rajshahi in bond by a wholesale dealer, who pays a duty of Rs. 11 per seer when issuing it for sale to the retail vendors. The right of retail sale is put up to auction and in 1904 Rs. 6,898 were paid for the 14 shops that are sanctioned for Nowgong. Ganja.

The receipts, on account of income tax, are very small and in 1903-04 only amounted to Rs. 6,876. Nearly one-half of this is derived from the salaries paid by companies and private employers, in other words the salaries drawn by managers of gardens and their staff, and about one-third is obtained from 'other sources of income.' Income Tax

The total number of assessees under the latter head was only 55. More than half were reported to have

incomes ranging from Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 1,250 per annum, and there were only three assessees with incomes of more than Rs 5,000 per annum. The bulk of the persons asssessed on 'other sources of income' were general shop keepers, and the balance was composed of 10 mauzadars, 9 buffalo keepers, 4 contractors, 3 pleaders, a doctor and a teacher.

**Stamps.** The receipts under the head both of judicial and non-judicial stamps, are considerably lower than those obtained from any other district in the plains. In 1903-04, they only amounted to Rs. 17,568 under the former head, as compared with Rs. 25,577 in Darrang, the next lowest district in the two Valleys, and Rs, 4,04,169 in Sylhet. The corresponding figures for non-judicial stamps were Rs. 3,923, Rs. 6,396 and Rs. 1,51,623. It is, however, only natural that with regard to this particular item of revenue, Nowgong should stand at the bottom of the list. It has a smaller population than any district in the plains, there is little crime, and very little trade or business to require the intervention of our courts.

**Public Works.** Public works are in charge of the Assistant or Executive Engineer, who is stationed at Tezpur, and who has, under his orders, a subdivisional officer with two upper and four lower subordinates in Nowgong.

The department is entrusted with the construction and maintenance of all the larger public buildings. The most important are the jail, the public offices, the circuit house, dak-bungalow, schools, and post and telegraph offices at Nowgong, and inspection bungalows,

on Provincial roads. Rest houses on other roads are maintained by the Local Board. The most important roads which are directly under the department are:—the section of the south trunk road which runs through the district from Nakhola *viâ* Jagi, Nowgong and Kuwarital to the frontier of Sibsagar, and the road from Amlaki to Kathiatali. It has already been explained that Local Board works, that require professional skill or engineering knowledge, are usually made over to the Excutive Engineer for execution. The principal difficulties with which the department has to contend are the absence of an artizan class, and the scarcity and dearness of unskilled labour, and it is to these two causes that the heavy cost of public works in Nowgong is largely due.

**Government**

Nowgong is not divided into any sub-divisions, and the district is under the immediate charge of the Deputy Commissioner who is allowed two subordinate magistrates as his immediate assistants.

The total number of clerks employed in the Deputy Commissioner's office in 1903 was 43, who drew altogether from Government Rs. 20,760 in salaries. Separate officers are in charge of the Police, Forests, Public Works, and Medical Department.

**Criminal and Civil Justice.**

Appeals lie to the Deputy Commissioner from orders passed by magistrates of the second or third class, and from the orders of first class magistrates to the Judge of the Assam Valley. Appeals from the Judge lie to the High Court of Fort William at Calcutta. In 1902, there were four stipendiary and two honorary

magistrates in the district and the former decided 1,072 and the latter 210 original criminal cases. In the course of these proceedings 3,148 witnesses were examined. Altogether there were 965 cases under the Penal Code returned as true, the immense majority of which were either offences against property or against the human body. There is little serious crime in Nowgong and most of these offences were either petty assaults or thefts of small sums. Civil work is not heavy, and the Deputy Commissioner acts as sub-judge while one of the assistant magistrates discharges the functions of a munsif. In 1902, the sub-judge heard 5 original cases and 45 appeals, while 1,262 original suits were disposed of by the munsif. Almost all of these cases were simple money suits and nearly three-fourths were disposed of without contest. Special rules are in force for the administration of criminal justice in the Mikir Hills. The jurisdiction of the High Court is barred and the Deputy Commissioner is empowered to pass sentences of death, transportation, and imprisonment exceeding seven years subject to the confirmation of the Local Government. Fine and imprisonment may be awarded in lieu of any other punishment, provided that the amount of punishment awardable for such offence under the Penal Code be not exceeded, and no appeal lies of right from any sentence by the Deputy Commissioner of less than three years imprisonment.

Registration.

The Deputy Commissioner is also the Registrar of the district, and one of the assistant magistrates acts as sub-

registrar. The number of documents registered is, however, very small, and in 1903 only amounted to 219, a fact which shows in a very striking manner how extremely simple is the economic organization of Nowgong.

**Volunteering.** Nowgong like most of the districts in Assam has no regular garrison, but a certain number of the European residents have been enrolled as volunteers. A corps of mounted infantry was first raised in Nowgong in 1888, with a strength of 30 members, and three years later, the volunteers in the four upper districts of the Valley, were formed into one corps known as the Assam Valley Mounted Rifles, which in 1896, was converted into a regiment of Light Horse. The strength of the corps in 1903, was 312, 21 of whom were residing in Nowgong.

**Police.** The civil police are in charge of a District or Assistant Superintendent of Police. The sanctioned strength consists of one inspector, 15 sub-inspectors, and 177 constables. Ninety-one smooth bore Martinis are allotted to Nowgong and a reserve of men is kept up at the district headquarters, who are armed with these weapons and are employed on guard and escort duty. Up-country men, Nepalese, and members of the aboriginal tribes are usually deputed to this work, though attempts are made to put all the constables through an annual course of musketry. There is very little organized crime, and the actual police duties are comparatively light. Table XIX in the Appendix shows the places at which there are investigating centres and the strength maintained at each.

**Jails.** The only jail in the district is situated at Nowgong, and has accommodation for 49 male convicts and 14 under-trial prisoners. The jail premises, which cover an area of almost three acres, were originally surrounded by a wall of masonry. Parts of this wall were thrown down by the earthquake of 1897, and the gaps have since been filled up with a bamboo palisade. Most of the wards are built of timber and bamboo with roofs of thatch. Female prisoners are transferred to Tezpur and male convicts sentenced to more than three months' imprisonment to Gauhati. The prisoners are principally employed on gardening and oil pressing.

**Education.** During the first half of the nineteenth century, the condition of education in Bengal was bad enough, but in Assam it was even worse. In 1841, Mr. Robinson of the Gauhati College described the state of education in the Valley as being "deplorable in the extreme."* He pointed out that unlike the Province of Bengal, where every village had its teacher supported by general contribution, provincial schools had only recently been introduced in Assam. In 1847-48, there were no secondary and only 10 primary schools in the district. The next few years witnessed very little progress as on the occasion of Mr. Mill's visit in 1853, there were only 13 schools of all grades.

In the following year, Major Butler reported that there were 14 vernacular schools, with 836 pupils on the rolls, but he drew a gloomy picture of the state of education in the district. "The proficiency attained

* A descriptive account of Assam, page 277.

by the boys at these institutions is very low indeed, few stay longer than is sufficient to enable them to read and write a common petition and acquire a little arithmetic, with a slight knowledge of the surveying in use in Assam. When their education is, in their own opinion, complete, they are qualified to become village Kaguttees or writers. One of the greatest impediments to the advancement of education in Assam, is the indifference with which it is received by the respectable classes. They show no wish whatever to see the rising generation educated or made wiser than themselves: in fact, I am half inclined to think, that, if the higher classes could prevent the youth of Assam from being instructed, they would not hesitate to do so."†

1874-75 is the first year for which complete statistics are available, and the following abstract shows the progress of education since that year. Figures for years subsequent to 1900-01 will be found in Table XXI.

| Year. | No. of secondary schools. | Pupils. | No. of primary schools. | Pupils. | Total no of pupils. | No. of persons in district to each pupil. | PERCENTAGE UNDER INSTRUCTION TO THOSE OF SCHOOL-GOING AGE. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | Males. | Females |
| 1874-75 | 9 | 487 | 81 | 2,316 | 2,803 | 92 | ... | ... |
| 1880-81 | 7 | 522 | 100 | 3,282 | 3,804 | 82 | 11·42 | 0·42 |
| 1890-91 | 5 | 539 | 175 | 5,138 | 5,677 | 61 | 20·62 | |
| 1900-01 | 5 | 430 | 112 | 4,063 | 4,493 | 58 | 21·79 | 0·76 |

The column showing the total number of pupils suggests that education is not spreading but receding, but

† Travels and adventures in the Province of Assam, by Major John Butler, p. 239, London, Smith Elder and Coy, 1855.

this of course is not the case. Each of the years selected shows an increase in the proportion of the people under instruction, and though there was but little spread of education during the last decade, to those acquainted with the calamities from which the district has been suffering this can hardly be a matter for surprise.

**Secondary education.** The schools of the district are divided into five grades, high, middle English, middle vernacular, upper primary, and lower primary. There is only one high school in the district which is situated at Nowgong.

The boys at this school are taught from the earliest stage of their education up to the Entrance course as prescribed by the University of Calcutta, but many leave school without completing the course. Till recently English was taught in all the classes. The smaller boys no longer learn that language, but the standard of instruction is higher than that prevailing in lower secondary (middle) schools. English is the medium of instruction in the first four classes of high schools, in the lower classes and in other schools the vernacular is employed. The couse of instruction at middle English and middle vernacular schools is the same, with the exception that English is taught in the former and not in the latter. The following are the subjects taught in the middle vernacular course :—

(1) Assamese, comprising literature, grammar and composition, (2) History of India, (3) Geography, (4) Arithmetic, (5) Elements of Euclid (Book I), Mensuration of plane surfaces and surveying, and (6) simple lessons in botany and agriculture. There are only five middle

schools in Nowgong, which are situated at Nowgong town, Raha, Demow-Salmara, Puranigudam, and Silghat.

**Primary education.** Primary education is again divided into upper and lower, but in 1903-04 there was only one upper primary school in the district. The course of study in lower primary schools includes Reading, Writing, Dictation, Simple Arithmetic, and the Geography of Assam. In upper primary schools the course is somewhat more advanced, and includes part of the first book of Euclid, Mensuration, and a little History. The standard of instruction given still leaves much to be desired, but efforts have been recently made to improve it by raising the rates of pay given to the masters. Fixed pay is now awarded at average rates of Rs. 8 per mensem for certificated and Rs. 5 per mensem for uncertificated teachers, supplemented by capitation grants at rates ranging from 3 annas to 6 annas for pupils in the three highest classes. For educational purposes, the district is in charge of a Deputy Inspector of schools who is assisted by two sub-inspectors.

**Medical.** The district is in the medical charge of the Civil Surgeon who is stationed at Nowgong. It contains ten dispensaries, and the supervision of the work done at these institutions is one of the most important duties of the Civil Surgeon. He also controls and inspects the vaccination department, and is required to visit and report on all tea gardens on which the death rate for the previous year has exceeded 7 per cent.

**Absence of rural sanitation.** The conditions under which the people pass their days are far from conducive to a long mean duration

of life. Their houses are small, dark, and ill-ventilated, and the rooms in summer must be exceedingly close and oppressive. They are built upon low mud plinths and are in consequence extremely damp, and the inmates, instead of sleeping on beds or bamboo platforms, which would cost them nothing to provide, often pass the night on a mat on the cold floor. Their attire, which is suitable enough for the warm weather, offers but a poor resistance to the cold and fogs of winter, and many lives are annually lost from diseases induced by chills, which might have been avoided by the purchase of a cheap woollen jersy. The houses are buried in groves of fruit trees and bamboos, which afford indeed a pleasant shade, but act as an effective barrier to the circulation of the air, and increase the humidity of the already over-humid atmosphere. Sanitary arrangements there are none, the rubbish is swept up into a corner and allowed to rot with masses of decaying vegetation, and the complete absence of latrines renders the neighbourhood of the village a most unsavoury place. The water supply is generally bad, and is drawn either from shallow holes, from rivers, or from tanks in which the villagers wash their clothes and persons. All of these are undoubtedly factors which contribute to produce a high mortality, and nearly every one of them could be eliminated.

**Vital statistics.**

Vital statistics are reported by the *gaobura* or village headman to the mandal of the circle, this report being in theory submitted every second week. In practice they were received at much longer intervals, as the *gaobura*

was an unpaid servant of Government and not very amenable to discipline. It has recently been decided to allot to each *gaobura* $2\frac{2}{3}$ acres of land revenue free, and it will now be possible to enforce a stricter adherence to the rules. Between 1891 and 1901, the mean recorded biith rate was 24 per mille, the death rate 45 per mille and it is certain that both of these figures were much below the truth. The statistics of age recorded at the census are, however, so unreliable, and the disturbing effect of immigrants is so great that it is not possible to fix a normal birth and death rate for the district. It is, however, fairly clear that the exceptional unhealthiness of the last decade not only killed off the people, but had a prejudicial effect on the fertility of the survivors. The number of children under 10 to every thousand of the population decreased from 329 in 1891 to 313 in 1901, and similar decreases were to be seen in Sylhet and the Khasi and Jaintia Hills where public health was also bad.

**Cholera.**

Epidemics of cholera from time to time produce a high mortality, for though it is apparently endemic in the district, it occasionally breaks out with quite exceptional violence. The abstract in the margin shows the recorded death rate from this cause in the years when cholera was most prevalent. For the purposes of comparison it may be added that the death rate in England from all causes in 1901 was only 16·9

| | | Cholera death rate per mille. |
|---|---|---|
| 1879 | ... | 11·9 |
| 1884 | ... | 9·0 |
| 1886 | ... | 10·1 |
| 1890 | ... | 9·9 |
| 1893 | ... | 9·7 |
| 1900 | ... | 25·0 |
| 1903 | ... | 6·7 |

per mille. In 1900, the recorded death rate in Nowgong from cholera alone was nearly 50 per cent. higher than the total death rate for England in the following year.

The distribution of cholera varies considerably from year to year, and is by no means confined to the villages that line the banks of the sluggish Kalang. In 1900, there was a terrible outbreak on the *chapari* from Dhing to Nij Tetelia, Ghugua and Dandua being the places most affected The recorded death rate per mille from cholera in these mauzas in that year was as follows Dhing, 58; Mikirbheta, 73; Ghugua and Dandua, 124; Charaibahi, 109; and Tetelia 63. It will be seen that the cholera death rate in these mauzas was much higher than the cholera death rate in the three tahsils at each of the four great epidemics,* though the Kalang flows through all the three. Mauzas that seem generally to be predisposed to cholera are Kachamari, which lies along the Kalang opposite Nowgong, and Jamunamukh and Kampur in the valley of the Kapili. It does not appear, however, that the Kapili can have much to do with the dissemination

Death rate per mille from Cholera in—

| | 1890 | 1893 | 1900 | 1903 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Samaguri ... | 9 | 10 | 12 | 11 |
| Nowgong ... | 10 | 10 | 13 | 20 |
| Raha ... | 5 | 17 | 23 | 4 |

* For the first two epidemics the rate is calculated on the population for 1891 for the last two on the population of 1901.

of the disease as Garubat and Kathiatali, which are in close proximity, have been fairly free. The mauzas on the *chapari* that suffered so terribly in 1900 were not very seriously affected by the other epidemics.

**Other diseases**

Other diseases which are prevalent in the district are worms, diseases of the skin such as itch and ring worm, ulcers, dysentery and diarrhœa, and rheumatic affections. Worms are extremely common and are said to be absorbed into the system through the coarser kinds of plantains. Elephantiasis is rare and only the simpler form of goitre is met with, but that is common, especially in the Mikir Hills. Venereal diseases are practically unknown amongst the indigenous population, though Bengali coolies and other foreigners are not unfrequently affected. Small-pox is endemic and occasionally breaks out in a most virulent form. The highest recorded death rate of recent years was 8·3 per mille in 1898. The people do not seem to be fully alive to the advantages of vaccination and only 32 per mille of the population was protected on the average in each of the five years ending with 1902-03.

**Kala Azar.**

The most deadly lethal agent in the district has, however, been the mysterious form of fever known as *kala-azar*. The following account of this disease is extracted from the Report on the Census of Assam in 1901.

"When first referred to in the Sanitary Reports of the province, it is described as an intense form of malarial poisoning, which was popularly supposed to be contagious. The Civil Surgeon of Goalpara, however, rejected the theory of contagion, and in 1884 expressed the opinion that *kala-azar* was simply a local name for malarial fever and its consequences. In 1889-90 a

specialist (Surgeon-Captain Giles) was appointed to investigate both *kala-azar* and the so-called *beri-beri* of coolies, and he rapidly came to the conclusion that *kala-azar* and *beri-beri* were merely different names for *anchylostomiasis*, and that the mortality was due to the ravages of the dochmius duodenalis, a worm which lives in the small intestine. This theory corresponded with the observed facts to the extent that it admitted, what at that stage of the enquiry could hardly be denied, that *kala-azar* was communicable, the uncleanly habits of the natives of the province affording every facility for the transfer of the ova of the parasite from the sick to the healthy; but the support which was given to Dr. Giles' views by local medical opinion was withdrawn when Major Dobson proved by a series of experiments that *anchylostoma* were present in varying numbers in no less than 620 out of 797 healthy persons examined by him. In 1896, Captain Rogers was placed on special duty to make further investigations, and, in addition to demonstrating various differences of a more or less technical character in the symptomatology of the two diseases, he pointed out that, whereas *kala-azar* was extremely inimical to life, the number of cases of *anchylostomiasis* that terminated fatally was by no means large. The conclusion to which this specialist came, after a very careful enquiry, was that the original view was correct, and that *kala-azar* was nothing but a very intense form of malarial fever, which could be communicated from the sick to the healthy, an opinion which was to a great extent endorsed by the profession in Assam, successive Principal Medical Officers declaring that, whatever *kala-azar* was, it had been abundantly proved that it was not *anchylostomiasis*. The suggestion that malaria could be communicated did not, however, commend itself to the entire medical world, and was criticised with some severity, Dr. Giles writing as recently as 1898—"Dr. Rogers, like a medical Alexander, cuts his Gordian knot by announcing that Assamese malaria is infectious. In this he places himself at variance with not only the scientific but the popular opinion of the entire world." A complete change in popular and scientific opinion was, however, brought about by the development of Manson's mosquito theory, and Major Ross, who visited Assam, in the course of his enquiry into the manner in which infection by malaria takes place, confirmed Dr. Rogers' conclusions, and in 1899 placed on record his opinion that, as stated by Dr. Rogers, *kala-azar* was malarial fever. The principal points of difference between *kala-azar* and ordinary malarial fever lie in the rapidity with which

the former produces a condition of severe cachexia, and the ease with which it can be communicated from the sick to the healthy. The origin of the disease is obviously a matter which must always be open to doubt. Captain Rogers is of opinion that *kala-azar* was imported from Rangpur, where malarial fever was extraordinarily virulent in the early seventies, but this is still a matter of conjecture."

"The first recorded case occurred at Nowgong in 1888, where it was brought from Gauhati by some boys who attended the school there, and in 1889 another centre of infection was started at Raha by a man who came home to die, after contracting the disease in Kamrup. Two years afterwards the infection was conveyed in the same way to Nakhola, and from these three centres the disease gradually spread over the whole district. The inaccuracy of the returns of vital occurrences collected by the unpaid *gaonburas* of the Assam Valley is well known, but it is possible to draw some conclusions from them, provided that the amount of error remains constant, and the recorded birth-rate for Nowgong is such as to justify us in assuming that there has not been any very marked improvement in registration during the last fourteen years. During the five years 1887-91, before *kala-azar* had got a grip on the district, the average number of deaths annually from fever was 4,405. Had this rate been maintained for the nine years ending December 31st, 1900, the total mortality from fever would have amounted to 39,645, but our records, imperfect though they are, show 93,824 deaths as due to fever and *kala-azar*, and we are thus left with a recorded mortality from *kala-azar* of 54,179 out of a population which in 1891 only numbered 347,307 souls. The following account was given by the Deputy Commissioner of the effects of the disease upon the district :—

The state of the district can hardly be realised by any one who has not travelled throughout it, and been into the villages. Deserted *basti* sites are common ; a few of the people in such cases removed elsewhere, but most stuck to their houses till they died. In Lalung and Hojai villages, I believe hardly anyone went elsewhere, and these two tribes lost very heavily. There used to be numbers of Hojais in the neighbourhood of Kharikhana ; almost all have died ; ten or twelve Hojai villages at the foot of the hills near Dabaka have completely disappeared, and Dabaka itself has shrunk from an important trade centre to a miserable hamlet. *kala-azar* is not only merciless in the number of its victims, but also in the way it kills. Men rarely

died under three months, and often lingered two years, sometimes even more. If two or three members of a family were attacked with the disease, all its little savings were spent to support them. *kala-azar* not only claimed victims in a family but left the survivors impoverished, if not ruined. A case which came under my personal notice will show what I mean: I noticed some fine rice land at Ghilani, near Kampur, lying uncultivated, and sent for the *pattadar* to question him about it. He came and said.—"We were three, my father, my elder brother, and myself. They died of *kala-azar*, and we sold our cattle and all we had to support them. Now I am ill, and shall die next year, how can I cultivate the land?." In many instances, an old man or woman, or two or three small children, are all that is left of a large family. In Nowgong, Raha, and Puranigudam are empty spaces where formerly houses stood, and the same sort of thing can be seen all over the district. So much land had gone out of cultivation that it has hardly any value except in the town, near Silghat, and in the Kandali mauza. A man will not buy land when it can be had for the asking.

Since this report was written a new theory has been mooted and it has been suggested that *kala-azar* may after all not be a malarial fever, but may be caused by those curious parasites which have recently been discovered in the spleens of fever stricken patients, and which are known as Leishman-Donovan bodies. Fortunately the disease is now fast dying out in Nowgong, and its origin and treatment are no longer the burning question that they were, but it will be many years before the district will have fully recovered from its ravages.

**Native methods of midwifery.**

The native methods of midwifery unfortunately leave much to be desired. There are very few professional midwives amongst the Assamese and a woman in her confinement is generally attended by her relatives or friends. In difficult cases they can render little help

and recourse is had to Heaven for assistance. An *ojha* or village medicine man is summoned and the first thing that he does is to have a plant called *son borial* pulled up by the roots, as an inspection of these roots enables him to pronounce an opinion on the prospects of the case. The patient is then required to eat a pan leaf, a betel nut, and a small worm found in the plantain tree. While she is doing this, the appropriate *mantras* are recited, a goat or a duck is sacrificed, and as a further precaution *mantras* are written out and tied round her neck and arm, or inscribed on a brass vessel which is placed where her eyes can fall upon it. In cases of false presentation attempts are made to drag the child out by anything that offers, and the abdomen is kneaded in the hope that the foetus may be expelled. In the absence of medical aid, and this aid is seldom to be obtained, the mother, in such cases, generally dies. The confinement sometimes takes place in a small hut which has been specially constructed for the purpose, and the patient's bed generally consists of an old mat laid on the floor. The unfortunate mother receives practically no assistance. If the labour is a natural one, all is well, but if complications arise, the case has usually a fatal termination, and it is probable that many lives are lost owing to a disregard of the rules of cleanliness which are of such paramount importance in these cases.

**Native medical methods.**

The natives are not altogether illogical in their therapeutic system, and believing, as they do, that many diseases are caused by the malignant action of some evil

spirit, they, not unreasonably, try to cure them by incantations, charms, and *mantras*. They have, however, simple prescriptions for some of the commoner ailments which are summarised below :—

(*a*) For fevers essence of ginger (*zingiber officianale*) prepared from the dried rhizome by maceration and percolation with a decoction of tulsi leaves (*Ocimum Bacilicum*) flavoured with honey as an excipient.

(*b*) For diarrhœa. Coriander seed (*Coriandrum Sativum*) and dry ginger, one chattak of each, and half a seer of water. This is boiled down to two chattaks. Dose, one chattak twice daily for two or three days, until improvement is maintained.

(*c*) For dysentry a decoction of turmeric (*Curcuma Longa*) made with lime water. One chattak to be taken twice or thrice daily.

(*d*) For dyspepsia. A combination of camphor, cloves, catechu, aniseed and rock salt, approximately one grain of each made up into a bolus and taken once daily usually in the morning.

(*e*) For diseases of the urinary organs linseed tea is given as a demulcent drink, as it is supposed to be efficacious in dissolving vesical calculi.

(*f*) For inflamatory diseases of the ear gum asafaetida (*Ferula alliacea*), coriander seed and dry ginger are prescribed. Equal parts of each of these are boiled together in a little oil and dropped into the ear when warm.

*(g)* For bronchitis. Essence of ginger one part, honey three parts, to be taken three or four times daily till relief is obtained.

*(h)* For diseases of the eye. Catarrhal and purulent opthalmia are treated internally with a decoction of the bark of titasapa (*Michelia champaca*) flavoured with honey as an adjunct. Externally the eyes are bathed frequently in a decoction of *Tamarindus Indica.*

*(i)* For spleenic enlargement. Internally fresh juice of papaya (*carica papaya*) on a few grains of sugar to be taken two or three times daily. Externally strips of cloth soaked in hot cow's urine are applied frequently over the region of the spleen.

*(j)* For cutaneous diseases, itch, ringworm, &c. Powdered sulphur made into an ointment with butter as it's basis is applied externally.

*(k)*. For worms. The fresh juice of pine-apple leaves is regarded as an efficacious anthelmintic.

**Increase in facilities for obtaining medical aid.**

Though there can be little doubt that many lives are annually lost which could be saved by proper treatment, it is satisfactory to know that of recent years there has been a great increase in the facilities for obtaining medical aid, and in the extent to which the people avail themselves of the advantages now offered to them. The first dispensary was opened in Nowgong town in 1863, but of recent years the number has very largely been increased. From the statement below it appears that for every patient treated in 1881,

there were 55 in 1901, while the number of operations performed rose from 16 to 1,159.

| | Dispensarses No. | Patients treated. No. |
|---|---|---|
| 1881 ... ... | .. 1 ... | 1,857 |
| 1891 ... ... | ... 4 ... | 34,939 |
| 1901 ... ... | .. 13 ... | 101,268 |

The principal dispensaries are those situated at Nowgong, Puranigudam, Silghat, and Dhing, each of which had a daily average attendance in 1903 of 40 or more. The diseases for which treatment is most commonly applied are malarial fevers, worms, cutaneous disorders, dysentery and diarrhoea, dyspepsia, and rheumatic affections.

Svey.ur

A professional revenue survey of the district was made at the time when Assam was still a division of Bengal and the maps were published in 1875. They are on the scale of one mile to the inch and shew the sites of villages and the physical features of the country. A smaller map on the scale of four miles to the inch was published in 1882 and brought up to date in 1893. An area of 1,003 square miles which included the more densely populated portions of the district was cadastrally surveyed in the season of 1887 and 1890-91. The maps are on the scale of 16 inches to the mile and in addition to topographical features show the boundaries of each field. Certain areas which were omitted by the professional party were subsequently surveyed by local agency on the basis of a theodolite traverse, and the results obtained from the cadastral survey both by professional and local agency have been utilized in the revision of the one inch maps.*

* The area so surveyed up to September 30th 1900 was 105 square miles.

APPENDIX.

# LIST OF TABLES.

STATEMENT.—A.

## LIST OF TEA GARDENS.

| NAME OF GARDEN. | Name of owner or Company to which it belongs. | Mauza in which situated. | Approximate distance by road from Nowgong town. | Area in 1904. | Area under tea (both mature and immature) in 1904. | Labour force in 1904 | REMARKS. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| | | | Miles. | Acres. | Acres. | | |
| 1. Amguri .. | Mr. White ... | Duar Bagari .. | 38 | 1,199 | 84 | 99 | |
| 2. Amlaki ... | Amlaki Tea Co. ... | Bhelenguri .. | 22 | 3,678 | 580 | 966 | |
| 3. Anjakpani ... | Salana Tea Co. .. | Duar Salana ... | 35 | 1,106 | 227 | 383 | |
| 4. Auguri ... | Kiling Valley Tea Association . | Gobha .. | 30 | 342 | Included in Kiling. | 133 | |
| 5. Balijuri ... | Messrs. J. E. Barlow and F. Barlow .. | Chalchali .. | 15 | 1,208 | 18 | 119 | |
| 6. Balikuchi .. | Messrs. J. E. Barlow, F. Barlow B. Howes and W. Macdonald .. | Sahari | 34 | 353 | 202 | 155 | |
| 7. Bamuni ... | Salana Tea Co. .. | Chalchali .. | 13 | 183 | 50 | Worked from Topotjuri. | |
| 8. Barhampur .. | Munshi Rahmat Ali .. | Sinjiapatani .. | 10 | 271 | 20 | Worked by village labour. | |
| 9. Barghat .. | Salana Tea Co. .. | Duar Salana ... | 24 | 2,138 | 560 | 612 | |
| 10. Barpani Valley .. | Mr. J. A. Middleton .. | Garubat .. | 30 | 814 | 396 | 578 | |
| 11. Borsanjar .. | Munshi Rahmat Ali ... | Chalchali .. | 18 | 366 | 45 | 20 | |
| 12. Chapanalla (European) .. | Chabua Tea Co. .. | Do. . | 18 | 721 | 133 | 173 | |
| 13. Do. (Native) .. | Munshi Mahammad .. | Do. .. | 19 | 462 | 233 | 145 | |
| 14. Diju Valley .. | Messrs. Begg Dunlop & Co. and J. Thomas & Co. .. | Duar Salana .. | 30 | 3,345 | 603 | 748 | |
| 15. Gobha .. | Kiling Valley Tea Association .. | Gobha .. | 45 | 353 | Included in Kiling. | Worked from Kiling. | |
| 16 Gorali .. | Messrs. King Hamilton & Co. .. | Chalchali .. | 16 | 80 | Included in Jiajuri. | Worked from Jiajuri. | |
| 17. Hatibandha .. | Salana Tea Co. .. | Duar Salana ... | 20 | 1,383 | 255 | Worked from New Salana. | |
| 18. Hatirgaon .. | Chabua Tea Co. ... | Barbhagia .. | 26 | 1,557 | Included in Kellyden. | Worked from Kellyden. | |
| 19. Hyah .. | Salana Tea Co. .. | Kathiatali .. | 14 | 854 | 142 | Worked from Kandali. | |
| 20. Jiajuri .. | Messrs. King Hamilton & Co. .. | Chapanalla .. | 18 | 1,216 | 615(a) | 635 (d) | |

(a) Include figures for Gorali.

# STATEMENT A.

## LIST OF TEA GARDENS.—*Concld.*

| NAME OF GARDEN. | Name of owner or Company to which it belongs. | Mauza in which situated. | Approximate distance by road from Nowgong town. | Area in 1904. | Area under tea (both mature and immature) in 1904. | Labour force in 1904. | REMARKS. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| | | | Miles. | Acres. | Acres. | | |
| 21. Kaliabar .. | Kaliabar and Sikani Tea Co., Ld. .. | Pubtharia .. | 32 | 714 | 320(*b*) | 396 | |
| 22. Kandali ... | Salana Tea Co. ... | Kandali .. | 12 | 2,343 | 430 | 531 | |
| 23. Kellyden .. | Chabua Tea Co. .. | Barbhagia ... | 25 | 2,092 | 867(*c*) | 1,690 | |
| 24. Kiling .. | Kiling Valley Tea Association .. | Uttarkhola ... | 30 | 174 | 560(*d*) | 380 | |
| 25. Kulikuchi ... | Messrs. J. E. Barlow, F. Barlow B. Howes and W. Macdonald .. | Sahari .. | 32 | 833 | 193 | 132 | |
| 26. Kuthari .. | Babu M. L. Haldar | Duar Bagari .. | 52 | 1,020 | 280 | 352 | |
| 27. Kutree .. | Kiling Valley Tea Association .. | Gobha ... | 30 | 330 | Included in Kiling. | Worked from Kiling. | |
| 28. Langsang ... | Messrs. J. E. Barlow and F. Barlow | Duar Salana ... | 19 | 800 | 311 | 427 | |
| 29. Lengteng ... | Salana Tea Co. ... | Ditto .. | 28 | 1,646 | 417 | 1,673 | |
| 30. Misa ... | Chabua Tea Co. ... | Barbhagia .. | 23 | 1,769 | 319 | 579 | |
| 31. Naopani .. | Salana Tea Co. ... | Duar Salana .. | 26 | 1,263 | 368 | Worked from Langsang | |
| 32. Neli .. | Kiling Valley Tea Association .. | Uttarkhola .. | 30 | 656 | Included in Kiling. | 92 | |
| 33. New Palkai .. | Babu M. L. Haldar ... | Duar Bagari .. | 43 | 791 | 50 | Worked from Palkai. | |
| 34. New Salana ... | Salana Tea Co. ... | Duar Salana . | 24 | 1,717 | 365 | 1,006 | |
| 35. Nonoi ... | Chabua Tea Co. ... | Bhelenguri .. | 18 | 1,512 | 284 | 258 | |
| 36. Old Salana ... | Ditto ... | Ditto .. | 21 | 923 | 459 | 619 | |
| 37. Palkai ... | Babu M. L. Haldar ... | Duar Bagari .. | 40 | 520 | 127 | 178 | |
| 38. Rangagara ... | Amlaki Tea Co. .. | Bhelenguri .. | 19 | 1,109 | 80 | 755 | |
| 39. Rangalu ... | Munshi Mandhan Saikia ... | Kathiatali ... | 12 | 498 | 67 | 41 | |
| 40. Rangamati ... | Chabua Tea Co. ... | Duar Salana .. | 20 | 523 | 376 | 865 | |
| 41. Rengbeng .. | Salana Tea Co. .. | Kathiatali .. | 16 | 966 | 78 | 126 | |
| 42. Sakimbari ... | Ditto .. | Ditto .. | 14 | 660 | 258 | 623 | |
| 43. Sakmuthi ... | Consolidated Tea and Lands Association Co., Ld. ... | Chutial .. | 29 | 2,221 | 670 | 838 | |
| 44. Sikani ... | Kaliabar and Sikani Tea Co., Ld. .. | Ditto .. | 31 | 1,078 | 558 | 770 | |
| 45. Sonari ... | Ditto ... | Pubtharia .. | 32 | 557 | Included in Kaliabar. | 369 | |
| 46. Topotjuri ... | Salana Tea Co. .. | Chalchali .. | 12 | 812 | 119 | 382 | |
| 47. Udmari ... | Messrs. J. B. Barlow and F. Barlow .. | Bhelenguri .. | 17 | 731 | 193 | 182 | |

(*b*) Includes figures for Sonari. (*c*) Includes figures for Hatirgaon. (*d*) Includes figures for Auguri, Gobha, Kutree and Neli.

## STATEMENT.—B.

*List of Post Offices.*

| Post Office. | Mauza in which situated. | Post Office. | Mauza in which situated. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chapanalla ... | Chalchali. | Nakhola ... | Gobha. |
| Dhing ... .. | Dhing. | Neli* ... ... | Uttarkhola. |
| Jakhalabandha ... | Chutialgaon. | Nowgong* ... | Nowgong town. |
| Jaluguti ... ... | Charaibahi. | Puranigudam ... | Chalchali |
| Kampur ... ... | Kampur. | Raha* ... ... | Barapujia. |
| Kathiatali ... | Kathiatali. | Salana* ... ... | Duar Salana. |
| Lumding* ... | Lumding Mikir. | Samaguri ... | Bhelenguri. |
| Misa* ... ... | Bhelenguri. | Silghat* ... .. | Pubtharia. |

* Combined post and telegraph office.

STATEMENT C.

*List of the most important trading villages.*

| Mauza or Tahsil. | Village. | No. of shops. |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Pubtharia mauza ... | Silghat ... ... | 8 |
| Chutial " ... | Jakhalabandha ... | 9 |
| | Nij Chutial .. ... | 4 |
| Barbhagia " ... | Mariagaon ... ... | 3 |
| Samaguri tahsil ... | Puranigudam ... ... | 10 |
| Nowgong " ... | Bargaon II ... ... | 10 |
| | Nowgong Town ... | 41 |
| | Phulaguri ... ... | 4 |
| Kathiatali mauza .. | Sagunbari ... ... | 6 |
| | Chari Ali ... ... | 4 |
| Jamunamukh " ... | Kathkatiagaon ... | 3 |
| Langpher " ... | Diphu (Railway station) ... | 3 |
| Rangkhang mauza ... | Amreng ... ... | 3 |
| | Barthalangcha... ... | 7 |
| | Hangkramukh... ... | 4 |
| | Kolonga ... ... | 6 |
| | Langorimukh .. ... | 5 |
| Raha tahsil ... | Amchoi ... ... | 4 |
| | Chaparmukh ... ... | 8 |
| | Dharamtul ... ... | 3 |
| | Laopani ... ... | 3 |
| | Neli .. .. | 3 |
| | Raha ... ... | 9 |
| Tetelia mauza ... | Bhakatgaon ... ... | 3 |
| | Marigaon ... ... | 3 |
| Charaibahi " ... | Jaluguti ... ... | 10 |
| Mikirbheta " .. | Nij Mikirgaon... ... | 3 |

STATEMENT D.

*List of Markets.*

| Mauza or Tahsil. | Village. | Day of the week on which market is held. | Mauza or Tahsil. | Village. | Day of the week on which market is held. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pubtharia mauza | Silghat ... | Everyday. | Jamunamukh mauza | Kathkatiagaon | Wednesday. |
| Chautial ,, ... | Jakhalabandha | Sunday. | Rangkhang ,, | Borthalangcha | Tuesday. |
| Samaguri tahsil ... | Chapanaila ... | Sunday. | | Hangkramukh | Monday. |
| | Jiajuri ... | Saturday. | | Nij Rangkhang | Varies. |
| | Samaguri ... | Sunday. | Raha tahsil .. | Amchoi ... | Monday. |
| | Topotjuri ... | Do. | | Bangaldhara | Wednesday. |
| Nowgong ,, ... | Nowgong ... | Everyday. | | Chaparmukh | Thursday. |
| | Phulaguri ... | Saturday. | | Khola ... | Tuesday. |
| Kandali mauza ... | Kandali ... | Tuesday. | | Neli ... | Monday. |
| | Chengmara ... | Sunday. | | Raha ... | Sunday and Wednesday. |
| Kampur ,, ... | Kampur ... | Friday. | Charaibahi mauza ... | Jaluguti .. | Friday. |
| Garubat ,, ... | Singimari ... | Sunday. | Gobha ,, ... | Nakhola ... | Sunday. |

## STATEMENT E.

*List of Fairs.*

| Mauza or Tahsil. | Village. | Estimated number of people attending. |
|---|---|---|
| Mauza Jagial (Sadr Tahsil) ... | Phulaguri ... ... | 1,000 or 1,200 |
| Raha Tahsil ... ... | Khabigarh ... ... | 400 or 500 |
| | Barapujia ... ... | Do. |
| | Kakamari ... ... | Do. |
| | Topakuchi ... ... | Do. |
| | Bangaldhara ... ... | Do. |
| Mauza Gobha ... ... | Jun bil ... ... ... | 400 |
| | Nakhola ... ... | 300 |
| " Nij Tetelia ... ... | Kholagaon ... ... | 500 or 600 |
| | Kumaigaon ... ... | 900 or 1,000 |
| | Gonamara ... ... | 200 or 300 |
| | Marigaon ... ... | 700 or 800 |
| " Nij Ghugua ... ... | Manipur ... ... | 500 |
| " Gerua Bakani ... | Pabhakati ... ... | 1,200 |
| | Gumalugaon ... ... | Do. |
| | Chenimarigaon ... ... | 400 |
| " Dandua ... ... | Dandua and Sapekatigaon ... | 500 |
| " Charaibahi ... ... | Nij Charaibahi and Patuakata Mikirgaon ... ... | 900 |
| " Mikirbheta ... ... | Mikerbheta ... ... | 300 |
| | Nij Mikirgaon Tehulia *bil* ... | 1,100 |
| | Bangaldhara ... ... | 400 |
| | Paghali ... ... ... | 500 |
| | Molan Kunora ... ... | 500 or 600 |
| " Hatichong ... ... | Chamuagaon and Nij Hatichong | 300 or 400 |

## TABLE I.

### RAINFALL.

*The number of years for which the average has been calculated is shewn below the name of each station.*

| Months. | Average rainfall in inches. | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Sikani. (11 years.) | Nowgong. (45 years.) | Lanka. (5 years.) |
| January ... ... ... | 0·55 | 0·77 | 0·28 |
| February ... ... ... | 0·71 | 0·98 | 0·44 |
| March ... ... ... | 2·60 | 2·44 | 2·52 |
| April ... ... ... | 6·44 | 5·43 | 3·18 |
| May ... ... ... | 9·86 | 9·12 | 3·48 |
| June ... ... ... | 11·07 | 12·34 | 5·51 |
| July ... ... ... | 16·60 | 16·05 | 8·21 |
| August ... ... ... | 15·62 | 14·74 | 8·05 |
| September ... ... ... | 11·24 | 10·79 | 6·94 |
| October ... ... ... | 4·43 | 3·67 | 3·14 |
| November ... ... ... | 0·34 | 0·49 | 0·06 |
| December ... ... ... | 0·36 | 0·28 | 0·37 |
| Total of year ... ... | 79·82 | 77·10 | 42·18 |

## TABLE II.

*Distribution of population.*

| Tahsil or mauza. | Population in 1901. | Population in 1891. | Difference. | Area in square miles. | Population per square mile. | Number of persons censused on tea garden. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nowgong Tahsil ... | 35,737 | 50,514 | — 14,777 | 92·49 | 386 | 37 |
| Samaguri " ... | 30,639 | 38,160 | — 7,521 | 144·42 | 212 | 7,457 |
| Raha " ... | 29,333 | 50,712 | — 21,379 | 172·64 | 169 | 1,172 |
| Chutialgaon mauza ... | 5,777 | 8,028 | — 2,251 | 12·44 | 464 | 1,811 |
| Pubtharia " ... | 6,034 | 5,609 | + 425 | 48·42 | 124 | 811 |
| Barbhagia " ... | 7,896 | 5,837 | + 2,059 | 29·98 | 263 | 1,827 |
| Dhing " ... | 9,116 | 11,844 | — 2,728 | 109·93 | 82 | ...... |
| Juria " ... | 2,723 | 5,938 | — 3,215 | 124·34 | 21 | ...... |
| Kachamari " ... | 6,116 | 9,070 | — 2,954 | 28·04 | 218 | ...... |
| Hatichong " ... | 8,963 | 10,719 | — 1,756 | 2·170 | 413 | ...... |
| Barkandali " ... | 7,216 | 9,657 | — 2,441 | 24·43 | 295 | 1,602 |
| Rangkang and Nomati mauzas ... ... | 17,184 | 25,685 | — 8,501 | 808·18 | 21 | ...... |
| Kampur mauza ... | 4,611 | 6,373 | — 1,762 | 19·75 | 233 | ...... |
| Garubat " ... | 3,727 | 7,658 | — 3,931 | 85·90 | 43 | 404 |
| Kathiatali " ... | 2,900 | 4,043 | — 1,143 | 17·50 | 165 | 482 |
| Nij Jamunamukh mauza | 3,993 | 6,184 | — 2,191 | 40·28 | 99 | ...... |
| " Ghurgua and Dandua mauzas ... ... | 12,059 | 14,853 | — 2,794 | 91·33 | 132 | ...... |
| Mikirbheta mauza ... | 11,394 | 13,861 | — 2,467 | 63·22 | 180 | ... |
| Charaibahi " ... | 5,359 | 6,667 | — 1,308 | 19·91 | 269 | ... |
| Mayang " ... | 4,706 | 7,368 | — 2,662 | 118·84 | 39 | ...... |
| Gerua and Bokani " ... | 9,901 | 13,316 | — 3,415 | 219·45 | 45 | ...... |
| Nij Tetelia " ... | 5,831 | 9,264 | — 3,433 | 43·33 | 134 | ...... |
| Gobha " ... | 2,956 | 4,822 | — 1,866 | 33·33 | 88 | 171 |
| Duar Bamuni " ... | 1,736 | 1,146 | + 590 | 139·99 | 12 | ...... |
| Duar Salana " ... | 7,594 | 5,538 | + 2,056 | 249·55 | 30 | 3,757 |
| Duar Bagari " ... | 2,483 | 1,967 | + 516 | 209·55 | 11 | 732 |
| Duar Amlaparbat " ... | 4,099 | 4,791 | — 692 | | | |
| Duar Dikharu " ... | 749 | 884 | — 135 | | | |
| Duar Kathiatali " ... | 844 | 1,116 | — 272 | | | |
| Langpher " ... | 1,259 | 1,488 | — 229 | 872·70 | 17 | ...... |
| Jamunapar " ... | 2,044 | 2,736 | — 692 | | | |
| Lumding Kachari "<br>" Kuki "<br>" Mikir " | 6,181 | 1,459 | + 4,722 | | | |
| Total district ... | 261,160 | 347,307 | — 86,147 | (a)3,842·51 | 68 | 20,263 |

(a) The area of the district was furnished by the Assistant Surveyor-General and does not tally with the sum total of the area of the mauzas, as the latter figures were obtained from the District Officer.

## TABLE III.

*General statistics of population.*

| Particulars. | | Persons. | Males. | Females. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| POPULATION— | | | | |
| | 1901 ... | 261,160 | 132,995 | 128,165 |
| | 1891 ... | 347,307 | 179,374 | 167,933 |
| | 1881 ... | 314,893 | 162,637 | 152,256 |
| | 1872 . | 260,238 | 135,031 | 125,207 |
| VARIATION— | | | | |
| | 1891-1901 ... | — 86,147 | — 46,379 | — 39,768 |
| | 1881-1891 ... | + 32,414 | + 16,737 | + 15,677 |
| | 1872-1881 ... | + 54,655 | + 27,606 | + 27,049 |
| 1901 | | | | |
| RELIGION— | | | | |
| Total Hindus ... | ... ... | 167,709 | 85,265 | 82,444 |
| Mahapurushias .. | ... ... | 83,105 | 40,318 | 42,787 |
| Other Vaishnavas... | ... ... | 45,994 | 23,590 | 22,404 |
| Saktists ... | ... ... | 13,135 | 7,009 | 6,126 |
| Sivaites .. | ... ... | 644 | 499 | 145 |
| Muhammadans ... | ... ... | 12,578 | 6,784 | 5,794 |
| Animistic ... | ... ... | 79,767 | 40,290 | 39,477 |
| Total Christians ... | ... ... | 593 | 305 | 288 |
| Anglican Communion | ... ... | 144 | 79 | 65 |
| Baptist ... | ... ... | 396 | 187 | 209 |
| Other religions ... | ... ... | 513 | 351 | 162 |
| CIVIL CONDITION— | | | | |
| Unmarried .. | ... ... | 132,904 | 74,803 | 58,101 |
| Married ... | ... .. | 95,005 | 49,530 | 45,475 |
| Widowed ... | ... ... | 33,251 | 8,662 | 24,589 |
| LITERACY— | | | | |
| Literate in Assamese | ... ... | 5,667 | 5,542 | 125 |
| Literate in English | .. .. | 707 | 678 | 29 |
| Illiterate ... | ... ... | 253,851 | 125,878 | 127,973 |
| LANGUAGES SPOKEN— | | | | |
| Assamese ... | ... ... | 171,258 | 85,039 | 86,219 |
| Eastern Hindi ... | ... ... | 14,120 | 8,444 | 5,676 |
| Bengali ... | ... ... | 14,889 | 8,068 | 6,821 |
| Lalung ... | ... .. | 12,612 | 5,968 | 6,644 |
| Mikir ... | ... ... | 34,273 | 17,399 | 16,874 |

*Note.*—The figures for 1891 and the preceding years are taken from Imperial Table II. page 2 of the Census of India-Volume IV. A. Assam. Part II. Tables.

# TABLE IV.

*Birth place, race, caste and occupation.*

| | Persons. | Males. | Females. |
|---|---|---|---|
| BIRTH PLACE— | | | |
| Born in the district .. ... | 226,393 | 111,406 | 114,987 |
| " " other parts of Province ... | 5,138 | 4,044 | 1,094 |
| " " Chota Nagpur ... ... | 10,572 | 5,491 | 5,081 |
| " " other parts of Bengal ... | 6,836 | 4,689 | 2,147 |
| " " United Provinces ... ... | 3,044 | 2,023 | 1,021 |
| " " Central Province ... ... | 6,205 | 3,082 | 3,123 |
| " " Nepal ... ... ... | 1,118 | 886 | 232 |
| " Elsewhere ... ... | 1,854 | 1,374 | 480 |
| Total " outside Assam ... ... | 29,629 | 17,545 | 12,084 |
| RACE AND CASTE— | | | |
| Boria ... ... ... | 7,799 | 3,708 | 4,091 |
| Brahman ... ... ... | 6,115 | 3,356 | 2,759 |
| Chutiya ... ... ... | 6,663 | 3,216 | 3,447 |
| Eurasian ... ... ... | 4 | 4 | ... |
| European (*a*) ... ... ... | 93 | 62 | 31 |
| Jugi ... ... ... | 15,045 | 7,334 | 7,711 |
| Kachari ... ... ... | 11,823 | 6,700 | 5,123 |
| Kalita ... ... ... | 16,326 | 8,419 | 7,907 |
| Kayastha ... ... ... | 2,149 | 1,237 | 912 |
| Kewat and Kaibartta ... ... | 13,272 | 6,764 | 6,508 |
| Koch and Rajbansi .. ... | 34,191 | 16,745 | 17,446 |
| Lalung ... ... ... | 28,985 | 13,542 | 15,443 |
| Mikir .. ... ... | 35,730 | 17,992 | 17,738 |
| Nadiyal ... ... ... | 18,887 | 9,346 | 9,541 |
| Namasudra ... ... ... | 5,299 | 2,628 | 2,671 |
| OCCUPATION— | | | |
| Workers ... ... ... | 160,197 | 86,417 | 73,780 |
| Dependents ... ... ... | 100,963 | ... | ... |
| TOTAL SUPPORTED— | | | |
| Landholders ... ... ... | 208,906 | 103,719 | 105,187 |
| Tenants ... ... ... | 5,602 | 2,863 | 2,739 |
| Garden labourers... ... ... | 19,105 | 9,709 | 9,396 |
| General labourers... ... ... | 4,078 | 3,176 | 902 |

(*a*). Includes allied races.

## TABLE V.

*Vital statistics.*

| Year. | Population under registration in 1901. | Ratio of births per mille. | Ratio of deaths per mille. | Ratio of deaths per mille from | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Cholera. | Small-pox | Fever | Bowel complaints. |
| 1901 ... | 261,160 | 29·84 | 25·36 | 0·13 | 0·05 | 19·84 | 1·53 |
| 1902 ... | 261,160 | 27·70 | 21·35 | 0·08 | 0·16 | 16·19 | 1·10 |
| 1903 ... | 261,160 | 35·17 | 26·90 | 6·73 | 0·52 | 14·39 | 1·21 |
| 1904 ... | 261,160 | 34·23 | 30·13 | 1·39 | 3·49 | 16·53 | 4 21 |
| 1905 ... | | | | | | | |
| 1906 ... | | | | | | | |
| 1907 ... | | | | | | | |
| 1908 ... | | | | | | | |
| 1909 ... | | | | | | | |
| 1910 ... | | | | | | | |
| 1911 ... | | | | | | | |
| 1912 . | | | | | | | |

TABLE

*Crops*

| PARTICULARS. | 1900-01. | 1901-02. | 1902-03. | 1903-04. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. |
| Total cropped area ... | 235,064 | 246,692 | 239,863 | 258,099 |
| Rice ... ... ... | 143,151 | 146,338 | 134,998 | 156,882 |
| Mustard ... ... | 33,673 | 39,229 | 46,311 | 46,623 |
| Sugarcane ... ... | 1,687 | 1,532 | 1,621 | 1,789 |
| Pulses ... ... ... | 13,939 | 16,377 | 14,983 | 15,266 |
| All other crops ... ... | 42,614 | 43,216 | 41,950 | 37,539 |

| PARTICULARS. | 1901. | 1902. | 1903. | 1904. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| TEA. | | | | |
| Number of gardens ... | 49 | 47 | 47 | 43 |
| Area in acres ... ... | 48,775 | 48,650 | 51,807 | 50,238 |
| Area under plant. Held by Europeans ... | 11,805 | 11,413 | 11,300 | 11,539 |
| Area under plant. ,, ,, Natives ... | 735 | 1,118 | 911 | 318 |
| Outturn of manufactured tea in lbs. | 4,470,548 | 4,231,103 | 4,417,611 | 4,563,544 |
| Labour force ... ... | 14,434 | 14,026 | 13,755 | 12,461 |
| Labourers including dependents imported during the year* ... | 1,341 | Not available | 1,117 | 417 |

* From 1903 immigration statistics relate to period from 1st July to 30th June.

VI.

*statistics.*

| 1904-05. | 1905-06. | 1906-07. | 1907-08. | 1908-09. | 1909-10. | 1910-11. | 1911-12. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Acres. | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. | Acres | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. |

| 1905. | 1906 | 1907. | 1908. | 1909. | 1910. | 1911 | 1912. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

TABLE

*Reserved*

| Name of Reserve | Area in square miles. | Date of constitution. | Character of Forests. | 1900-01. | 1901-02. | 1902-03. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. |
| Sonaikushi ... | 17 | 17th Mar. 1887. | Rocky hills about one-tenth of which is covered with Sal Sida and Koroi are common. | 4 | 23 | 30 |
| Kholahat ... | 26 | 25thNov. 1887. | Partly hills and partly plains about one-third of which is covered with Sal. Dense evergreen forest partially explored. Poma, Sida, Ajhar, and Koroi are common. | ·367 | 489 | 392 |
| Rangkhang ... | 10 | 17th Mar. 1887. | Plain forest about one-eighth of which is covered with Sal, Poma, Koroi Sida and Paroli common. | nil. | nil. | nil. |
| Dabaka ... | 45 | 17th Oct. 1878. | Hills. The plain portion is covered with Sal, Nahor, Sam and Pacha bamboos. | 33 | 6 | 41 |
| Sildharampur ... | 6 | | Hills. Three small plots of Sal. Dense evergreen forest, not explored. | 11 | nil. | nil. |
| Jungthung ... | 13 | 27th Sep. 1889. | All hills. One patch of young Sal forest not explored. | nil. | nil. | nil. |
| Bamuni ... | 1 | | Plain forest. Thoroughly explored. All covered with young Sal. | 60 | 153 | 151 |
| Suang ... | 10 | 30th July 1891. | Hills. One-eighth of which is covered with Sal. Poma, Koroi and Sida common. | 241 | 580 | 208 |
| Diju Valley ... | 8 | | Hills. Plains about one-half is covered with Sal. Sam, Poma, Nogeswar (Wallachii) common. | 621 | 1,695 | 2,379 |
| Kukrakata Hill... | 6 | | Hill. No Sal. Dense evergreen forests, Paroli Sida and Koroi common. | 20 | 25 | 61 |

VII.

*forests.*

| Receipt. | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1903-04. | 1904-05. | 1905-06 | 1906-07 | 1907-08. | 1908-09 | 1909-10 | 1910-11. | 1911-12. |
| Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. |
| 21 | | | | | | | | |
| 1,882 | | | | | | | | |
| nil. | | | | | | | | |
| 14 | | | | | | | | |
| nil. | | | | | | | | |
| nil. | | | | | | | | |
| nil. | | | | | | | | |
| 136 | | | | | | | | |
| 5,509 | | | | | | | | |
| 18 | | | | | | | | |

TABLE

*Fire protection and outturn of timber*

| DETAILS. | | 1900-01 | 1901-02. | 1902-03. | 1903-04. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Area under protection ... | sq. miles .. | 143 | 143 | 143 | 143 |
| Area protected ... | sq. miles ... | 143 | 143 | 143 | 143 |
| Percentage ... | ... | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Cost ... | Rs. | 872 | 611 | 705 | 661 |
| RESERVED FORESTS— | | | | | |
| Area ... ... | sq. miles .. | 143 | 143 | 143 | 143 |
| Outturn (Government and purchaser only). | | | | | |
| Timber .. | cft. ... | 4,843 | 11,700 | 10,628 | 21,329 |
| Fuel ... ... | cft. ... | 20,356 | 3,271 | 3,420 | 1,050 |
| UNCLASSED STATE FORESTS— | | | | | |
| Area .. ... | sq. miles ... | 2,989 | 3,453 | 3,418 | 3,436 |
| Outturn (Government and purchaser only). | | | | | |
| Timber ... | cft. ... | 48,270 | 56,021 | 73,648 | 56,065 |
| Fuel ... ... | cft. ... | 36,918 | 24,640 | 35,584 | 19,924 |
| Rubber ... ... | Rs. | 609 | 4 | 25 | 94 |
| Forest receipts ... | Rs. | 10,258 | 11,587 | 14,779 | 18,189 |
| Forest expenditure ... | Rs. | 13,627 | 13,966 | 13 447 | 18,300 |
| Surplus or deficit ... | Rs. | −3,369 | −2,379 | +1,332 | −111 |

VIII.

*and fuel and value of minor forest produce.*

| 1904-05 | 1905-06. | 1906-07. | 1907-08. | 1908-09. | 1909-10. | 1910-11. | 1911-12. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | |

## TABLE IX.

*Prices of food staples in seers obtainable per rupee.*

| | | Nowgong. | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Common rice. | Salt. | Matikalai. |
| 1880 { 2nd Week of February ... | 13 | 7½ | 16 |
| 2nd Week of August ... | 16 | 7½ | 20 |
| 1890 { 2nd Week of February ... | 16 | 8 | 20 |
| 2nd Week of August ... | 13 | 9 | 20 |
| 1900 { 2nd Week of February ... | 20 | 9 | 20 |
| 2nd Week of August ... | 14 | 9 | 12 |
| 1901 { 2nd Week of February ... | 12 | 9 | 13 |
| 2nd Week of August ... | 7 | 9 | 13 |
| 1902 { 2nd Week of February ... | 13 | 9 | 13 |
| 2nd Week of August ... | 8 | 9 | 14 |
| 1903 { 2nd Week of February ... | 11 | 9 | 14 |
| 2nd Week of August ... | 10 | 10½ | 12½ |
| 1904 { 2nd Week of February ... | 16 | 10 | 16 |
| 2nd Week of August ... | 13 | 11 | 16 |
| 1905 { 2nd Week of February ... | 16 | 11 | 16 |
| 2nd Week of August ... | | | |
| 1906 { 2nd Week of February ... | | | |
| 2nd Week of August ... | | | |
| 1907 { 2nd Week of February ... | | | |
| 2nd Week of August ... | | | |
| 1908 { 2nd Week of February ... | | | |
| 2nd Week of August ... | | | |
| 1909 { 2nd Week of February ... | | | |
| 2nd Week of August ... | | | |
| 1910 { 2nd Week of February ... | | | |
| 2nd Week of August ... | | | |
| 1911 { 2nd Week of February ... | | | |
| 2nd Week of August ... | | | |
| 1912 { 2nd Week of February ... | | | |
| 2nd Week of August ... | | | |

# TABLE

*Criminal and*

| HEADS OF CRIME. | 1902. | | 1903. | | 1904. | | 1905. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | True. | Detected. | True. | Detected. | True. | Detected. | True | Detected. |
| CRIMINAL JUSTICE. | | | | | | | | |
| Number of cases. | | | | | | | | |
| (i) Rioting and unlawful assembly. Sections 143-153, 157, 158 and 159 ... ... | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 4 | | |
| (ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity &c. .. ... | 4 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 3 | | |
| (iii) Murder, attempt at murder and culpable homicide. Section 302-304, 307, 308 and 396 .. .. | 2 | ... | 3 | 3 | 5 | 4 | | |
| v) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Section 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335 .. .. | 7 | 5 | 12 | 7 | 9 | 7 | | |
| (v) Serious criminal force. Sections 353, 354, 356 and 357 .. .. .. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | | |
| vi) Other serious offences against the person .. .. .. | 7 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 6 | | |
| (vii) Dacoity. Section 395, 397 and 398 .. | ... | .. | ... | .. | .. | ... | | |
| (viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal. Sections 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430-433 and 435-440 ... .. | 8 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | -- | | |
| (ix) House breaking and serious house trespass. Sections 449-452, 454, 455 and 457-460 -- .. .. | 48 | 15 | 54 | 13 | 34 | 17 | | |
| (x) Wrongful restraint and confinement. Section 341-344 .. .. .. | 5 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 4 | 4 | | |
| (xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against the property | ... | ... | .. | ... | 1 | .. | | |
| (xii) Theft Sections 379 and 382 ... .. | 127 | 71 | 118 | 60 | 103 | 55 | | |
| (xiii) Receiving stolen property. Sections 411 and 414 .. .. ... | 6 | 6 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 11 | | |
| (xiv) Lurking and criminal house trespass. Sections 453, 456, 447 and 448 .. | 9 | 4 | 10 | 3 | 16 | 10 | | |
| (xv) Other minor offences against property | 5 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 3 | | |
| TOTAL ... | 237 | 124 | 239 | 122 | 214 | 127 | | |
| CIVIL JUSTICE. | | | | | | | | |
| Number of suits for money and moveables ... | 1,269 | | 1,050 | | | | | |
| Title and other suits ... .. | 22 | | 27 | | | | | |
| Rent suits .. ... .. ... | ..... | | .... | | | | | |

# X.

*Civil Justice.*

| 1906. | | 1907. | | 1908. | | 1909. | | 1910. | | 1911. | | 1912. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| True. | Detected. | True. | Detected. | True. | Detected. | True. | Detected. | True. | Detected | True. | Detected. | True. | Detected. |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

TABLE

*Fluctuations in*
*Proportion of fluctuating*

| PARTICULARS. | | 1900-01. | 1901-02. | 1902-03. | 1903-04. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. |
| Settled area ... | ... | 260,304 | 258,330 | 265,889 | 272,829 |
| Area excluded from settlement | ... | 43,482 | 42,033 | 26,651 | 22,828 |
| Area included in settlement | ... | 31,946 | 40,530 | 34,685 | 30,084 |
| Revenue demand ... | Rs. | 5,50,558 | 4,48,941 | 4,67,478 | 4,77,613 |

TABLE

*Miscellaneous*

| PARTICULARS. | | 1900-01. | 1901-02. | 1902-03. | 1903-04. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. |
| Fisheries ... ... | ... | 10,056 | 9,828 | 11,300 | 13,930 |
| House tax ... ... | ... | 9,261 | 6,693 | 6,147 | 7,043 |
| Other heads ... | ... | 460 | 76 | 392 | 759 |
| Total | ... | 19,777 | 16,597 | 17,839 | 21,732 |

XI.

*settled area.*

*area to settled area in 1903-04—31 per cent.*

| 1904-05. | 1905-06. | 1906-07 | 1907-08. | 1908-09. | 1909-10 | 1910-11. | 1911-1912. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Acres. | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. |

XII.

*land revenue.*

| 1904-05. | 1905-06. | 1906-07. | 1907-08. | 1908-09. | 1909-10. | 1910-11. | 1911-12. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. |

TABLE

*Finance*

| Principal heads of revenue. | 1890-91. | 1900-01. | 1901-02. | 1902-03. | 1903-04. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. |
| Land revenue (Ordinary) ... | 5,03,260 | 5,60,677 | 4,60,395 | 4,66,121 | 4,76,614 |
| Do. (Miscellaneous) ... | 30,027 | 19,777 | 16,597 | 17,839 | 21,732 |
| Provincial rates ... | 33,420 | 36,693 | 29,373 | 31,103 | 32,082 |
| Judicial stamps ... | 23,088 | 21,275 | 19,343 | 19,303 | 17,568 |
| Non-judicial stamps ... | 4,752 | 4,106 | 3,734 | 3,996 | 3,923 |
| Opium ... ... | 2,84,103 | 2,37,163 | 2,29,142 | 2,58,564 | 2,71,876 |
| Country spirits ... | 4,424 | 28,190 | 28,883 | 25,380 | 22,866 |
| Ganja ... ... | 5,248 | 14,100 | 13,611 | 16,147 | 14,381 |
| Other heads of excise ... | 930 | 424 | 507 | 1,131 | 677 |
| Assessed taxes ... ... | 9,348 | 9,912 | 8,724 | 9,122 | 6,876 |
| No. of assessees per 1000 of population ... ... | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Forests ... ... | 10,611 | 10,258 | 11,587 | 14,779 | 18,189 |
| Registration ... ... | 441 | 203 | 241 | 264 | 238 |
| TOTAL ... | 9,09,652 | 9,42,778 | 8,22,137 | 8,63,749 | 8,87,022 |

XIII.

*Receipts.*

| 1904-05. | 1905-06. | 1906-07. | 1907-08. | 1908-09. | 1909-10. | 1910-11. | 1911-12. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. |

TABLE

*Land*

| Particulars. | 1900-01. | 1901-02. | 1902-03. | 1903-04. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. |
| Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops ... ... | 201,509 | 199,570 | 207,079 | 213,844 |
| Held on ordinary tenures .. | 193,813 | 191,874 | 199,383 | 206,148 |
| Held revenue free (Lakhiraj) .. | 2,314 | 2,314 | 2,314 | 2,314 |
| Held at half rates (Nisfikhiraj) ... | 5,382 | 5,382 | 5,382 | 5,382 |
| Total land settled for cultivation of special staples ... ... ... | 56,229 | 56,158 | 56,161 | 56,318 |
| Area of fee simple and commuted grants ... ... .. | 21,349 | 21,349 | 21,349 | 21,349 |
| Area settled under other special rules | 469 | 469 | 469 | 469 |
| Area settled on 30 years lease ... | 30,998 | 30,998 | 30,998 | 31,155 |
| Area held under ordinary rules or resettled on expiry of 30 years lease ... ... ... | 3,413 | 3,342 | 3,345 | 3,345 |
| Total land settled under other tenures ... | 2,566 | 2,602 | 2,649 | 2,667 |
| Total settled area of the district ... | 260,304 | 258,330 | 265,889 | 272,829 |
| Total unsettled area of the district ... | 2,199,216 | 2,201,190 | 2,193,631 | 2,186,691 |

XIV.

*tenures.*

| 1904-05. | 1905-06. | 1906-07. | 1907-08. | 1908-09. | 1909 10. | 1910-11. | 1911-12. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Acres. | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. |

# TABLE XIV. A.

*Total area and unsettled area in each tahsil and mauza in 1902-03.*

| Tahsils and mauzas. | Total area. | Un-settled area. | Remarks. |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Square miles. | Square miles. | |
| Tahsils-Nowgong ... | 91 | 39 | |
| Raha .. .. | 174 | 131 | Includes 3 square miles of reserved forests. |
| Samaguri ... | 145 | 77 | |
| Mauzas-Barbhagia .. | 30 | 1 | |
| Charaibahi ... | 20 | 12 | |
| Chutialgaon ... | 13 | 4 | |
| Dandua ... | 25 | 16 | |
| Dhing ... ... | 109 | 61 | |
| Duar Amla ... | Not known. | | House tax paying mauza. |
| " Bagari ... | 210 | 202 | Includes 6 square miles of reserved forests. |
| " Bamuni ... | 140 | 135 | Do. 24 Do. Do. |
| " Dikharu .. | Not known. | | House tax paying mauza. |
| " Kathiatali .. | Do. | | Do. |
| " Salana .. | 249 | 234 | Iucludes 19 square miles of reserved forests. |
| Garubat .. | 86 | 81 | |
| Gerua .. .. | 154 | 136 | |
| Ghugua : | 63 | 55 | |

| Tahsils and mouzas. | Total area. | Un-settled area. | Remarks. |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Square miles. | Square miles. | |
| Gobha .. | 33 | 28 | Includes 17 square miles of reserved forests. |
| Hatichong .. | 22 | 10 | |
| Jamunamukh .. | 40 | 33 | Iucludes 1 square mile of reserved forests. |
| Jamunapar ... | Not known. | | House tax paying mauza. |
| Juria .. ... | 124 | 119 | |
| Kachamari .. | 28 | 14 | |
| Kampur ... ... | 20 | 13 | |
| Kandali .. .. | 24 | 8 | |
| Kathiatali ... | 18 | 9 | |
| Langpher ... | Not known. | | House tax paying mauza. |
| Lumding (Kachari) | Do. | | Do. |
| Do. (Kuki) ... | Do. | | Do. |
| Do. (Mikir) .. | Do. | | Do. |
| Mikirbheta ... | 66 | 49 | |
| Mayang ... | 119 | 110 | |
| Namati ... | 338 | 337 | Includes 7 square miles of reserved forests. |
| Pubtharia ... | 48 | 38 | |
| Rangkhang .. | 475 | 473 | Includes 10 square miles of reserved forests |
| Tetelia ... | 41 | 32 | |

TABLE

*Excise*

| Principal Heads. | | 1900-01. | 1901-02. | 1902-03. | 1903-04. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of opium shops ... | ... | 144 | 149 | 144 | 134 |
| Amount paid for licenses ... | Rs. | 39,628 | 39,104 | 41,280 | 44,674 |
| | | md. srs. ch. | md. srs. ch | md. srs. ch. | md. srs. ch. |
| Quantity of opium issued ... | ... | 173 11 1 | 166 28 0 | 190 24 0 | 200 2 0 |
| Duty on opium sold ... | Rs. | 1,97,535 | 1,90,038 | 2,17,284 | 2,27,202 |
| Number of ganja shops ... | ... | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 |
| Amount paid for licenses ... | Rs. | 7,488 | 6,549 | 6,616 | 6,898 |
| | | md. srs. ch. | md. srs. ch. | md. srs. ch. | md. srs. ch. |
| Amount of ganja issued ... | ... | 19 18 0 | 19 32 0 | 26 19 0 | 22 10 0 |
| Duty on ganja sold ... | Rs. | 6,612 | 7,062 | 9,531 | 7,483 |
| Number of country spirit shops | ... | 18 | 17 | 16 | 14 |
| Amount paid for licenses ... | Rs. | 28,190 | 28,883 | 25,380 | 22,866 |
| Number of distilleries ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Amount of liquor issued ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Still-head duty .. ... | Rs. | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Number of retail shops ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Amount paid for licenses ... | Rs. | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Other heads of excise revenue | Rs. | 424 | 507 | 1,131 | 677 |

XV.

*revenue.*

| 1904-05. | 1905-06. | 1906-07. | 1907-08. | 1908-09. | 1909-10. | 1910-11. | 1911-12. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| md.srs. ch. | md.srs. ch. | md.srs. ch | md.srs. ch. | md.srs. ch. | md.srs. ch. | md.srs. ch. | md. srs. ch |
| md.srs.ch. | md.srs. ch. | md.srs. ch. | md.srs. ch. | md.srs. ch | md. srs. ch. | md.srs. ch. | md. srs. ch. |

## TABLE XVI.

*Income and expenditure of Nowgong Local Board.*

| Sources of income. | Income. | | Heads of expenditure. | Expenditure. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1890-91. | 1900-01. | | 1890-91. | 1900-01. |
| | Rs. | Rs. | | Rs. | Rs. |
| Provincial rates ... | 33,421 | 36,692 | Post office ... | 1,867 | 804 |
| Police ... ... | 4,741 | 3,598 | Administration ... | 236 | 236 |
| Tolls on ferries ... | 4,439 | 2,856 | Education ... | 12,475 | 10,050 |
| Contributions ... | 8,591 | 6,220 | Medical ... | 3,113 | 10,831 |
| Debt ... ... | ... | 225 | Civil Works ... | 26,730 | 24,583 |
| Miscellaneous ... | 112 | 130 | Debt ... | ... | 310 |
| | | | Contributions ... | ... | 2,000 |
| | | | Miscellaneous ... | 2,896 | 1,732 |
| Total ... | 51,304 | 49,721 | Total ... | 47,317 | 50,546 |

## TABLE XVII.

### MUNICIPAL.

*Nowgong Municipality.*

| Sources of income. | Income. | | Heads of expenditure. | Expenditure. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1895-96. | 1900-01 | | 1895-96. | 1900-01. |
| | Rs. | Rs. | | Rs. | Rs. |
| Opening balance ... | 1 | 1,814 | Administration ... | 724 | 1,153 |
| Tax on houses and lands | 1,478 | 2,005 | Conservancy ... | 2,648 | 3,574 |
| Pounds ... ... | 2,892 | 2,062 | Public Works ... | 3,130 | 2,174 |
| Fees from markets ... | 350 | 543 | Public instruction ... | 165 | 274 |
| Grants from Government and Local Funds ... | 5,000 | 5,000 | Drainage ... | 1,047 | 2,000 |
| | | | Other heads .. | 2,536 | 1,022 |
| Other sources ... | 1,455 | 2,241 | Closing balance ... | 926 | 3,468 |
| Total ... | 11,176 | 13,665 | Total ... | 11,176 | 13,665 |

## TABLE XVIII.

*Strength of police force.*

| PARTICULARS. | 1881. | 1891. | 1901. |
|---|---|---|---|
| CIVIL POLICE. | | | |
| SUPERVISING STAFF. | | | |
| District and Assistant Superintendents ... | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Inspectors ... ... ... ... | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| SUBORDINATE STAFF. | | | |
| Sub-Inspectors ... ... ... | 4 | 4 | 15 |
| Head Constables ... ... ... | 8 | 14 | 11 |
| Constables ... ... ... | 86 | 128 | 166 |
| Total expenditure ... ... Rs. | 20,783 | 26,264 | 44,399 |

Actual strength for 1881 and sanctioned strength for other years.

## TABLE XIX.

*Police stations and outposts in 1904.*

| Name of Police Station or Outpost. | SANCTIONED STRENGTH. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Sub-Inspector. | Head Constable. | Constables. | TOTAL. |
| Jagi Outpost ... ... | 1 | ... | 6 | 7 |
| Jamunamukh " ... ... ... | 1 | ... | 7 | 8 |
| Kaliabar " ... ... ... | 1 | ... | 6 | 7 |
| Kuthari Roadpost ... ... ... | ... | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| Nakhola Outpost ... ... ... | 1 | ... | 5 | 6 |
| Nowgong Police station ... ... | 3 | ... | 12 | 15 |
| Raha " ... ... | 2 | ... | 10 | 12 |
| Samaguri " ... ... | 2 | ... | 10 | 12 |

## TABLE XX.

### JAIL STATISTICS.

*Nowgong Jail.*

| Particulars. | | 1881 | 1891 | 1901 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Average daily population ... | Male ... | 47·48 | 74·46 | 52·38 |
| | Female ... | 1·94 | ·97 | .02 |
| Rate of mortality per 1,000 ... | ... | ... | 53 | ... |
| Expenditure on jail maintenance ... | Rs. | 3,270 | 4,276 | 5,911 |
| Cost per prisoner (a) (excluding civil prisoner) | | 20 | 33 | 59 |
| Profits on jail manufacture ... | ... | 2,903 | 1,912 | 608 |
| Earnings per prisoner (b) ... | ... | 67 | 28 | 13 |

(a) On food and clothing only.
(b) Calculated on the average number sentenced to labour.

TABLE

*Edu-*

| | 1900-01. | 1901-02. | 1902-03. | 1903-04. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| SECONDARY SCHOOLS. | | | | |
| *High Schools—* | | | | |
| Number ... ... ... | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| " of boys reading in High School Classes ... | 33 | 35 | 32 | 40 |
| " of boys reading in Middle School Classes ... | 45 | 43 | 50 | 69 |
| " of boys reading in Primary Classes ... ... | 95 | 110 | 130 | 119 |
| *Middle English School—* | | | | |
| Number ... ... ... | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| " of boys reading in Middle School Classes ... | 2 | 3 | 6 | ... |
| " of boys reading in Primary Classes ... ... | 31 | 43 | 27 | 101 |
| *Middle Vernacular Schools—* | | | | |
| Number ... ... ... | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| " of boys reading in Middle School Classes ... | 44 | 41 | 36 | 46 |
| " of boys reading in Primary Classes ... ... | 172 | 154 | 207 | 156 |
| PRIMARY SCHOOLS. | | | | |
| *Upper Primary Schools—* | | | | |
| Number ... ... ... | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| " of boys reading in Upper Primary Classes ... | 30 | 18 | 18 | 20 |
| " of boys reading in Lower Primary Classes ... | 60 | 13 | 27 | 18 |
| *Lower Primary Schools—* | | | | |
| Number ... ... ... | 108 | 115 | 112 | 118 |
| " of boys reading in three Upper Classes | (a) 3,834 | (a) 4,069 | 1,724 | 1,526 |
| " of boys reading in Lower Classes ... | | | 2,422 | 2,249 |
| FEMALE EDUCATION. | | | | |
| Number of Girls' Schools ... | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| " of girls reading (whether in girl's or boy's Schools) in— | | | | |
| High Schools | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Middle English Schools ... ... | 7 | 6 | 1 | ... |
| Middle Vernacular Schools ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... |
| Upper Primary Schools ... ... | ... | ... | .. | ... |
| Lower Primary Schools ... ... | 139 | 176 | 155 | 110 |

(*a*) Separate figures.

XXI.

*cation.*

| 1904-05. | 1905-06. | 1906-07. | 1907-08. | 1908-09. | 1909-10. | 1910-11. | 1911-12. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | |

not available.

## TABLE XXII.

*Educational finance.*

| PARTICULARS. | No. of Institutions. | Expenditure on Institutions maintained or aided by public funds in 1900-01 from. Provincial Revenues. | District and Municipal Funds. | Fees. | Other sources. | Total. | Amount per head of scholar. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. As. P. |
| Training and special schools ... | 2 | 180 | 184 | ... | ... | 364 | 45 8 0 |
| Secondary boys' school:— | | | | | | | |
| Upper (High) ... | 1 | 2,900 | ... | 2,879 | ... | 5,779 | 35 7 3 |
| Lower (Middle) ... | 4 | 1,334 | 708 | 720 | 776 | 3,538 | 14 7 0 |
| Primary boys' schools :— | | | | | | | |
| Upper ... | 2 | ... | 297 | 74 | 70 | 441 | 6 2 0 |
| Lower ... | 108 | ... | 7,610 | 485 | 5 | 8,100 | 2 4 7 |
| Girls' schools .. | 2 | ... | 324 | ... | 271 | 595 | 9 2 5 |
| TOTAL ... | 119 | 4,414 | 9,123 | 4,158 | 1,122 | 18,817 | 4 9 6 |

# TABLE XXIII.

## *Medical.*

| | 1881. | 1891. | 1901. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of dispensaries ... ... | 1 | 4 | 13 |
| Daily average number of in-door patients ... | 9·32 | 11·14 | 33·43 |
| " " " out-door " ... | 6·75 | 134·87 | 456·58 |
| Cases treated ... ... ... | 1,857 | 34,939 | 101,268 |
| Operations performed ... ... | ·16 | 255 | 1,159 |
| Total income ... ... Rs. | 2,704 | 6,259 | 21,238 |
| Income from Government ... Rs. | 1,335 | 2,089 | 9,899 |
| Income from Local and Municipal funds Rs. | 293 | 2,232 | 9,350 |
| Subscriptions ... ... Rs. | 1,000 | 981 | 849 |
| Total expenditure ... ... Rs. | 2,051 | 6,162 | 21,004 |
| Expenditure on establishment ... Rs. | 912 | 2,818 | 9,768 |
| Ratio per mille of persons successfully vaccinated ... ... ... | 4·16(*a*) | 28·21 | 26·42 |
| Cost per case ... ... Rs. | Not available | 0 1 10 | 0 2 3 |

(*a*) Figure for 1881-82.

TABLE

*Dispen*

| NAME OF DISPENSARY. | 1900. | | 1901. | | 1902. | | 1903. | | 1904. | | 1905. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total cost. | Cases treated. | Total cost. | Cases treated. | Total cost. | Cases treated. | Total cost. | Cases treated. | Total cost. | Cases treated. | Total cost. | Cases treated. |
| | Rs. | | Rs. | | Rs. | | Rs. | | Rs. | | Rs. | |
| Nowgong .. | 8,701 | 9,809 | 7,025 | 10,164 | 7,288 | 11,547 | 7,232 | 11,519 | 10,607 | 13,020 | | |
| Raha .. | 1,389 | 8,000 | 1,175 | 8,030 | 2,362 | 7,339 | 1,369 | 8,353 | 1,558 | 10,364 | | |
| Silghat .. | 1,326 | 8,690 | 1,244 | 10,100 | 1,220 | 10,279 | 1,958 | 10,786 | 1,676 | 9,460 | | |
| Puranigudam ... | 1,398 | 11,159 | 1,218 | 12,258 | 1,148 | 13,428 | 1,527 | 13,065 | 1,668 | 14,408 | | |
| Kampur .. | 1,335 | 6,436 | 1,216 | 6,396 | 2,067 | 6,276 | 1,349 | 8,936 | 1,212 | 8,014 | | |
| Nanai .. | 1,251 | 8,870 | 1,104 | 8,308 | 1,022 | 7,020 | 1,461 | 7,556 | 1,658 | 7,354 | | |
| Jaluguti .. | 1,233 | 6,897 | 1,080 | 7,588 | 884 | 7,569 | 1,351 | 9,716 | 1,461 | 8,573 | | |
| Jagi .. | 1,255 | 3,882 | 1,160 | 4,311 | 1,138 | 4,368 | 1,260 | 5,033 | 1,160 | 7,122 | | |
| Borjoha .. | 1,296 | 6,805 | 1,043 | 6,254 | 1,044 | 7,171 | 1,343 | 7,858 | 1,343 | 10,035 | | |
| Dhing ... | 1,164 | 9,492 | 1,294 | 10,168 | 1,390 | 10,203 | 1,472 | 10,463 | 1,370 | 10,043 | | |

XXIV.

*saries.*

| 1906. | | 1907. | | 1908. | | 1909. | | 1910. | | 1911. | | 1912. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total cost. | Cases treated. | Total cost. | Cases treated. | Total cost. | Cases treated. | Total cost. | Cases treated. | Total cost. | Cases treated. | Total cost. | Cases treated. | Total cost. | Cases treated. |
| Rs. | | Rs. | | Rs. | | Rs. | | Rs. | | Rs. | | Rs. | |

# INDEX.